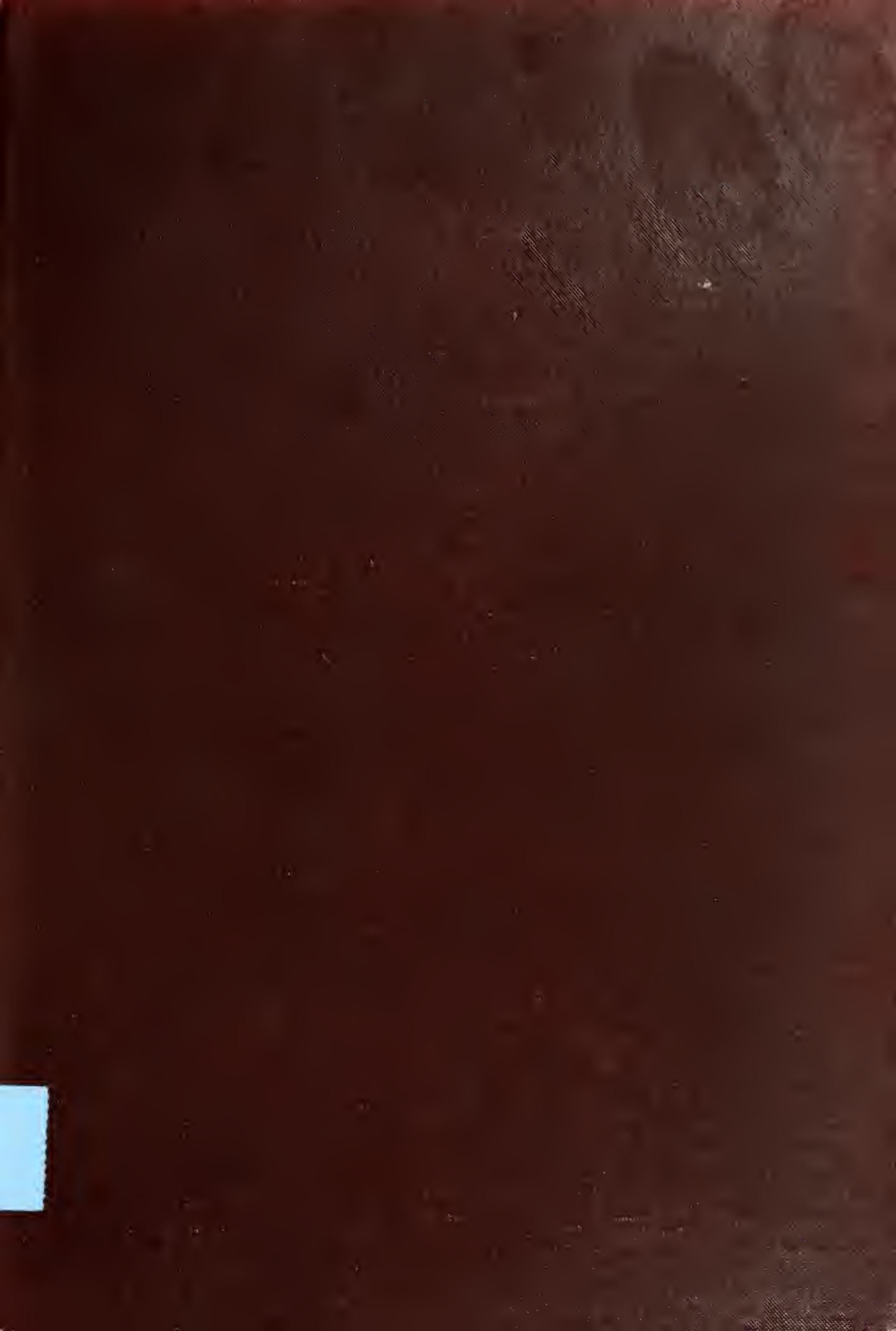
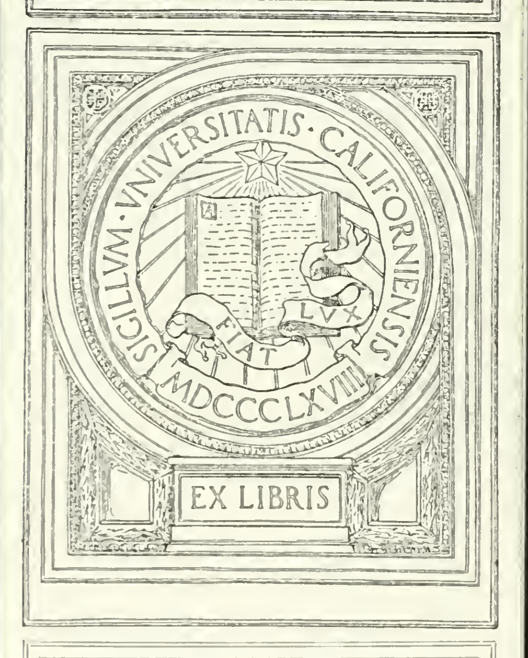



SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
FIAT LVX
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS







THE FUTURE OF SCIENCE.

BY ERNEST RENAN.

One Volume. 8vo. 515 pages. Cloth. Price, $2.50.

"It would be difficult to name a man of literary genius comparable in breadth and depth of learning, or fertility and charm of expression, to M. Ernest Renan. Certainly in all France there is none like him. The fact is just as plain that both in and out of France he has been persistently misunderstood by certain of his readers, and misrepresented by those who have not and will not read him. He has, for instance, been called a man without a religion, and now, as though in answer to this statement, and by way of refuting the commoner charge that levity is the characteristic and habitual frame of mind in which he lives, he has published a volume entitled 'The Future of Science' (Boston: Roberts Brothers), wherein he sums up the new faith which with him has replaced 'shattered Catholicism.' . . .

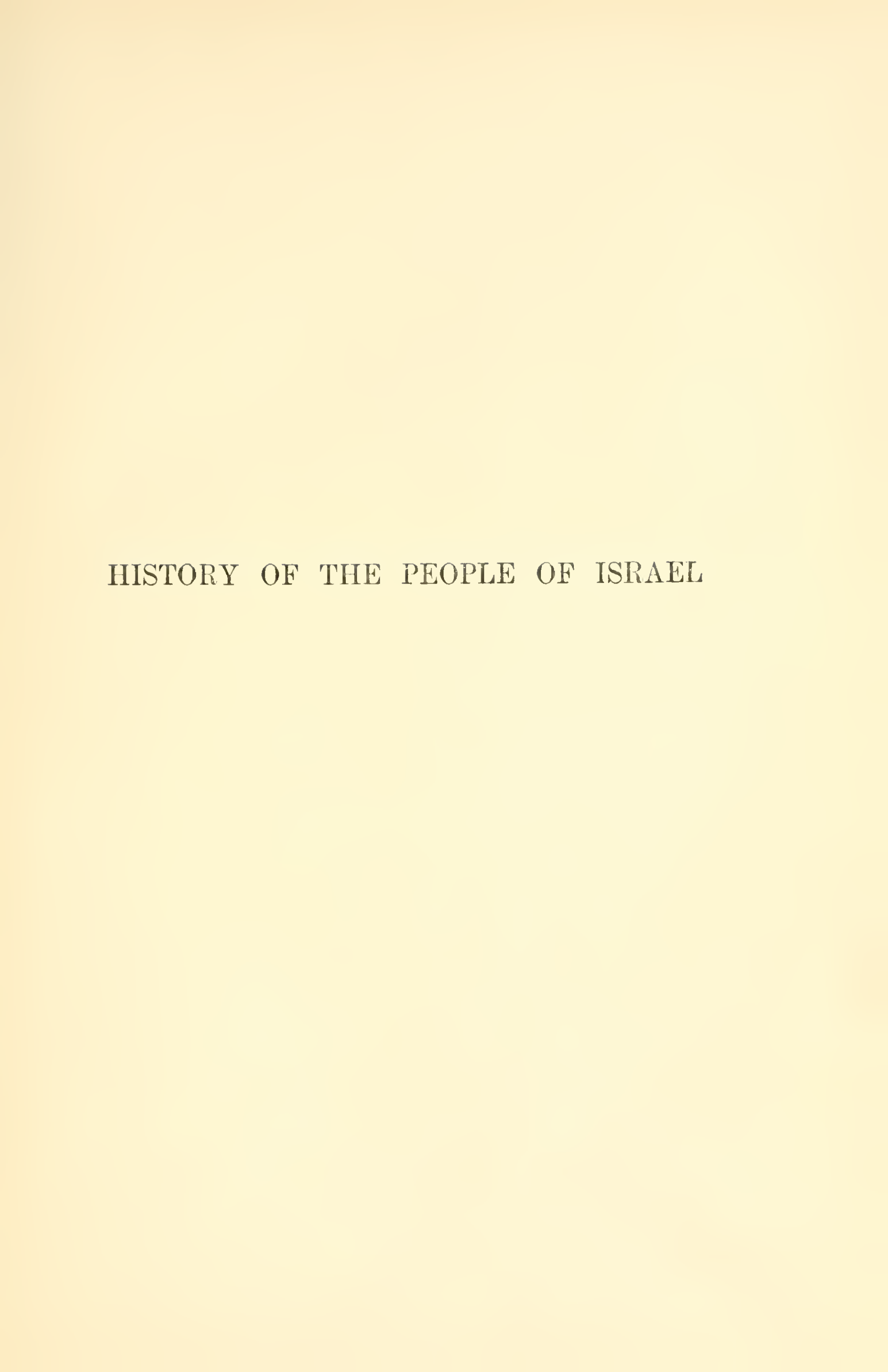
"It should not be supposed that M. Renan is here seriously attempting to found a new religion, or even to formulate a new system of philosophy. We have read the volume rather as a personal statement of the delights of learning and of productive scholarship, and as such it has a distinct and rare value. Nowhere does it open itself to a profitable criticism that would refuse to challenge the veracity of the author." — *Philadelphia Press.*

"Although Ernest Renan wrote much of this book many years ago (shortly after he left the Catholic Church) it is to-day an epitome of the most advanced modern thought. In a style so exquisitely simple that we think not of the words nor of the writer but only of the thought, he sums up what science has done for us already. We are brought into full view of the idols it has knocked down. With clear vision we can look back and see the long road up which the human race has toiled; our eyes, thanks to science, unclouded by superstition, can study it. And how much man's position has altered! He was not especially created. He was not foreordained to everlasting punishment, nor elected to eternal bliss. And this great change of thought, affecting the foundations of our social, political, and religious being, we owe to science. . . .

Will science ever clear away the rubbish and show us a broader, fairer land than that which has encouraged the toilers before? Renan's book gives great hope of this. It is written in a tone of courage and cheerfulness that is very inspiring. He admits the danger of the transition period, the relaxation of moral strength with the stimulus removed. "Chimeras have succeeded in obtaining from the good gorilla an astonishing moral effort; do away with the chimeras and part of the factitious energy they aroused will disappear." But when between the lines of this book we can detect, as we do, a spirit devout, tender, upright, cheerful, and serene, it seems that the future state of pure rationalism which science aims to bring about would not be incompatible with human goodness and happiness." — *Chicago Tribune.*

Sold by all Booksellers. Mailed, postpaid, by the publishers.

ROBERTS BROTHERS, BOSTON.



HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL



HISTORY

OF THE

PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

FROM THE REIGN OF DAVID UP TO THE
CAPTURE OF SAMARIA

BY

ERNEST RENAN

AUTHOR OF "LIFE OF JESUS"

VOL. II.

BOSTON
ROBERTS BROTHERS
1896

PRESSWORK BY JOHN WILSON AND SON,
UNIVERSITY PRESS.

CONTENTS.

Book IV.

THE TWO KINGDOMS.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHAPTER IX.

CHAPTER X.

CHAPTER XI.

CHAPTER XII.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHAPTER XV.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHAPTER XX.

CHAPTER XXI.

CHAPTER XXII.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CHAPTER XXIV.



PREFACE.

THIS volume contains what I consider the most important part of the history of Judaism. Iahveh, the national God of the Jews, undergoes therein a complete transformation. From a local and provincial God, he becomes, through a kind of return to the old patriarchal Elohism, the Creator of Heaven and Earth. He becomes, above all things, a just God, which national gods, necessarily full of partiality towards their *clientèle*, never are. The introduction of morality into religion becomes an accomplished fact. Amos, Hosea, Micah and Isaiah, at the date at which this volume stops, have proclaimed it in passages the beauty of which has never been surpassed.

At the first blush, Judaism would seem to be a religion coeval with the world, or, to be more accurate, one that has had no beginning. That is a very erroneous conception. Judaism, like all re-

ligions, has had a starting-point, and required nearly four hundred years for its development. About a thousand years before Christ, the Israelite religion, which has since been called Judaism, did not exist. The religion of David and Solomon did not materially differ from that of the neighbouring peoples in Palestine. No doubt a sagacious eye might detect the germs which were to develop later on; but if we reason in this way, a beginning and an end cannot be assigned to anything. The features of predestination to a religious vocation, which are foreshadowed in Israel from the remotest period, become clearly set forth only in the ninth century before Christ. The Prophets then become creators in the highest sense of the word. Elijah and Elisha are the legendary representatives of that great revolution. Then the movement is continued by men with whom we are, after a fashion, in contact, and whose writings we possess. In reality, at the advent of Hezekiah, about seven hundred and twenty-five years before Christ, Judaism had attained its full formation. That which the Epoch of Josiah, the restorers of the period of Zerubbabel, the reform of Ezra may have added to it, is a sectarian organisation of marvellous solidity.

I shall endeavour to show, in the next volume,

how that work of organisation was accomplished which became completed about four hundred and fifty years before Christ. Judaism henceforth sums up the whole religious work of mankind, since Christianity and Islam are but lateral branches of it. The work of the Israelite genius was, in reality, only damaged in the eighteenth century after Christ, when it became very doubtful to somewhat cultivated minds whether things in this world were regulated by a just God. The exaggerated idea of a peculiar Providence, which is the basis of Judaism and Islam, and which Christianity has only corrected through the substratum of Liberalism inherent in our races, became definitively vanquished by modern philosophy, the offspring, not of abstract speculations, but of constant experience; it has, in fact, never been established by observation that a superior being troubles himself, for a moral or an immoral purpose, with the things of nature or the affairs of mankind. An extensive transposition, therefore, requires to be effected in all the religious ideas we have inherited from the past. It cannot be said that the formula which would satisfy us has yet been found.

A word is due, to explain the dates here given for the reader's convenience. Excepting that of the

capture of Samaria, — which is ascertained within a year or thereabout, — these are to be regarded as only approximate. The chronology of the period from the death of David to the destruction of the northern kingdom is extremely obscure, owing almost wholly to errors brought into the Hebrew text by abbreviators, compilers, and copyists. Note only that the reigns of the Judean and the Israelitish kings, from the secession under Jeroboam to the end of the northern kingdom, when separately added up, do not agree in the total number of years covered by them. The margin of error, in fixing the dates of David's and Solomon's time, may be not far from fifty years. Under the method of approximation which I have adopted, the figures here given are not, at most, more than twenty years wide of the truth, and in the later chapters are much less.

Note. — The leading dates here referred to are the following: —

1025–995. Reign of David at Jerusalem.
995–955. Reign of Solomon.
925–905. Asa and Jehoshaphat (in Jerusalem).
900–860. House of Omri: Ahab (in Samaria).
825–775. Reign of Jeroboam II.
770–750. Advance of the Assyrians.
740–735. Earlier prophecies of Isaiah and Micah.
725–696. Reign of Hezekiah.
730–721. Final struggle and fall of Samaria.

HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL.

BOOK III.

THE ONE KINGDOM.

CHAPTER I.

THE GOVERNMENT OF DAVID.

The power of David, definitely established king of Judah and of Israel, in his fortress of Zion, at Jerusalem, was considerably beyond that of a sofet. All men stood in fear of him; an order from him was executed from Dan to Beersheba. His commands might appear to be very absolute, but they did not amount to very much. There was no written religion or legislation; all was ruled by custom. A strongly constituted family life among his subjects relieves a ruler of a great deal of anxiety. Thus the government of David may be regarded as being at once very strong and very simple, something after the fashion of the small royalty of Abd-el-Kader at Mascara, or of the attempted dynastic formations

which we see being made in our own day in Abyssinia. What takes place at the court of a negus, say at Magdala or at Gondar, is the perfect image of the kingdom of David in his *millo* of Zion. The distribution and the duties of the functionaries, the organisation of the public revenue, the fidelity of those employed, the written accounts—which were probably very scanty—would no doubt enable any one who took the trouble to study the matter from this point of view to make some interesting comparisons.

This reign, at once flexible and strong, patriarchal and tyrannical, lasted just thirty-three years.* David, when upon the throne, still displayed the qualities which had procured his accession to it. He does not appear to have ever committed any useless crime; he was only cruel when there was any profit to be derived from it. Vengeance, in this world of strong passions, was considered as a sort

* The documents upon the reign of David compiled in the Second Book of Samuel, are of three kinds: 1st, the contemporary notes of David himself and derived, perhaps, from the *Mazkir*, such as the short notes on chapters viii., xxi., and xxiii.; 2nd, a long fragment of a history written with no little art and prolixity, viz. the story of Absalom; 3rd, the fragments of one or two *Lives of David*, written in the prophetic circles, and the most modern parts of which appear to date from the time of Hezekiah. As far as regards the *Chronicles*, they must be regarded very much like those of *Josephus*. What the modern historiographers add to the old narratives of the Books of Samuel and of the Kings possess little value. At times, nevertheless, the author of the *Chronicles* writes as if he had in his hands a Book of Kings more complete than that which we possess.

of duty, and David discharged it conscientiously. The founders of new dynasties, when they are confronted with the remnants of ancient dynasties, are always inclined to be suspicious. The converts from the other side who come over to them, exacerbate their not unnatural suspicions. They, better than any one else, are in a position to take the measure of human fidelity. Why should the newly converted be stauncher in their engagements to them than they were to their former masters ?

The family of Saul, although still very rich, had fallen low enough for David to be able to afford to show himself generous towards it; this generosity was, of course, to a great extent calculated. At first, David affected great benevolence for Mephibosheth, the lame son of his friend Jonathan. After the death of Es-baal, the land of Mephibosheth, at Gibea, had been usurped by one of his stewards named Ziba. Mephibosheth was living in want at a small place called Lo-debar, beyond Jordan, near Mahanaïm. David had his lands restored to him, had him brought to Jerusalem, and set at his own table as one of the king's sons. But the implacable ambitions of the East give but a very slender significance to what we call friendship, gratitude, generosity, the voice of kinsmanship; neither David nor Mephibosheth, doubtless, was in the least doubt as to the other's motives. Mephibosheth, though paying court to David, nurtured his secret hopes, while the latter never lost sight of the fact that here was a possible rival,

and was on the look-out for a pretext for bringing about his ruin.*

The two sons born to Saul of his concubine, Rizpah, caused David even greater anxiety. It was the same with the five sons which Merab (or Michal), the daughter of Saul, had borne to her husband, Adriel. The way in which David got rid of these possible sources of trouble to him is related by the ancient historian with a candour which is grandiose in its style.†

David liked to appear to have been compelled to do the acts which he was most anxious to do. It was quite in keeping with his policy to make himself the avenger of Iahveh himself, for crimes in which he had connived. This procured for him the double advantage of serving Iahveh in his own fashion, and of ridding himself of those who stood in his way.

The harem of David, which seems to have been a very small one at Hebron, was increased at Jerusalem by a great number of wives and concubines. At least eleven sons were born to him during this fresh period.‡ The royal house soon became rich, and thus we find Absalom possessing, at Baalhazor, beside Ephraim, flocks and herds.

The *millo* palace was a vast house, where hospitality was dispensed at the cost of the king. The frequenters of the royal house were regarded as privileged.||

* 2 Samuel, ch. ix. † Ibid. ch. xxi. v. 1–14.

‡ Ibid. ch. v. v. 16. § Ibid. ch. xiii. v. 23.

|| Episodes of Mephibosheth, Barzillai, Prefects of Solomon, etc.

These entertainments were often more or less festivals, in which singing men and singing women took part, and it was regarded as a high privilege to pass one's life amid this luxury, and to taste of it every day.*

The importance of the women who made up the royal harem differed, of course, very much. The most active, undoubtedly, was the celebrated Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, who appears to have been an able woman, with great authority over her husband. Her entrance into the harem is explained by means of an act of adultery and a crime.†

It is difficult to say whether this story contains any fragment of truth. David was not a saint, but we are entitled to clear his memory of so abominably planned a murder as that of his servant Uriah the Hittite. What may be taken as certain is that Bath-sheba was powerful enough to secure the succession to her son. Under the reign of Solomon we shall find her playing the part of a powerful Sultana-Validé (Sultan's mother).

There was little scope for administrative or judicial arrangements in such a government. Centralisation scarcely existed. The action of the king was slight in the tribes other than Judah and Benjamin, in what was called Israel, in opposition to Judah.‡ A numbering of the people was represented as an enormity and a crime.§ There was no conscription; the permanent

* 2 Samuel, ch. xix. v. 35 and following.

† Ibid. ch. xi. and xii.

‡ Ibid. ch. xix. v. 41 and following. § Ibid. ch. xxiv.

army of David was almost entirely composed of men of Judah and Benjamin, and of strangers, especially of Gittites, who followed David after his first sojourn at Gath.* In the tribes of the North, the only sign of a change of *régime* was a security which had not hitherto been enjoyed. The government was like that of an Arab tribe, with its extreme simplicity of proceeding. Private affairs continued to be treated at the gate of the city, by the counsel of old men. In the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, however, a great many suits were brought before the tribunal of the king, who judged them in his quality of absolute sovereign.†

Only one city (Jerusalem) constructed any large buildings. Royalty marked its presence there by a palace, an arsenal,‡ a treasury formed of precious metals and stones taken from strange peoples, especially the Arameans. As there was scarcely any coined money at this time, the booty consisted chiefly in articles of gold and bronze.§ It seems that David had already something in the shape of cavalry. Judea was so little suitable for the manœuvring of iron chariots that they were very little used in Israel.|| As for the richly caparisoned horses, they came from Egypt during the reign of Solomon.¶

* 2 Samuel, ch. xv. v. 18.

† Ibid. ch. xiv., verses from 1 and following; the second verse of the 8th chapter of Samuel (Book 2) is a slightly exaggerating summary.

‡ Song of Solomon, ch. iv. v. 4.

§ Hosea, ch. x. v. 5.

|| See below, p. 28.

¶ Song of Solomon, ch. i. v. 9.

The number of persons employed in the government of David was very limited. All its ministerial organisation, if it may be so called, is described in three lines.* Joab, son of Zeruiah, was his *sar-saba* (his *seraskier*, as it would be termed in Turkey); Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, was chief of the Kreti-Pleti, that is to say of the foreign guard; Adoram, or Adoniram, son of Abda, had authority over the forced labour or grants in kind. The scarcity of money put anything like a control of finance out of the question. Zeruiah† was *sopher*, that is to say scribe, or secretary of state, entrusted with the ordering and discharge of business. Jehosaphat, the son of Ahilud, was *mazkir*, that is to say lord chancellor, archivist and historiographer.‡ These two latter functions presupposed the use of writing.

There can be no doubt, in fact, that writing was much resorted to at the time of which I am now treating. Among the fragments which now compose the biography of David in the historical Hebrew books,§ we probably possess more than one page dating from the very time of David, and which may have been traced by the pen of Zeruiah or Jehosaphat-

* 2 Samuel, ch. viii. v. 15–18; ch. xx. v. 23–25.

† Name presenting variations between which it is difficult to choose. Compare 2 Samuel, ch. xx., the ancient versions, the parallel passages of the Chronicles, and 1 Kings, ch. iv. v. 2.

‡ We have the word *mazkir* applied to David (2 Samuel, ch. viii. v. 16, and following), to Solomon (1 Kings, ch. iv. v. 3), to Hezekiah (2 Kings, ch. xviii. v. 18 and 37; 2 Chronicles, ch. xxxiv. v. 8; Isaiah, ch. xxxvi. v. 3 and 22).

§ Especially 2 Samuel.

ben-Ahilud; for instance, the lists of the *gibborim* and the anecdotes relating to them,* and certain short notes upon the expeditions of David.† The state manuscripts, the genealogies, the documents relating to the transmission of property, must also have been among the attributions of the *mazkir.*

David appears to have had but slight relations with Egypt, still less with Assyria, whose action at this epoch did not extend as far as the shores of the Mediterranean. His relations with the Phœnician towns on the coast appear to have been friendly; but David was not prone, like Solomon, to seek contact with civilisations outside. He was too completely the ideal man of one race to think of supplementing what might be wanting in himself from outside, very much like Abd-el-Kader, in our own day. The Philistines alone were in David's eyes the true masters; so as the Philistines represented a primitive and barbarian Greece, here we have the first fissure through which the Aryan influence was exercised over Israel.

Much wiser than Saul, David acted justly towards the Canaanites, who formed upon the surface of Israel splashes of distinct populations. David favoured the fusion of these ancient inhabitants of the soil with the Israelites. He appears to have considered the men of the two races indistinctly as his subjects.‡ He has Hittites, notably one Uriah, among the

* 2 Samuel, ch. xxi. and xxiii.

† Ibid. ch. v. and viii. ‡ Ibid. ch. xxiv. v. 5 and following.

bravest and most favoured of his officers.* He makes to the rancour of the Gibeonites a concession which would be incredible had it not responded to the requirements of his policy.† The Canaanites and the Hittites were as much imbued with Iahveism as the Israelites.‡ The Gibeonites, while recognising that Iahveh was the God of the victorious, adored Iahveh and offered him human sacrifices.§ At Jerusalem, we find, according to certain texts, a Jebusite named Arevna, or Averna, who had remained rich and an owner of land after the conquest, upon the best of terms with David, and taking part in all the king did for the worship of Iahveh.||

The consequences of this conciliatory policy might have been excellent. Progress was being made towards that kind of fusion which constitutes a nation. The distinctions between the ancient tribes were fading away. The Benjaminites had been so closely connected with the men of Judah in the making of royalty, that the two tribes became henceforth almost indistinguishable from each other. Jerusalem was situated upon the border-line of the two tribes, and became a common capital for them.¶ The junction

* See vol. i. p. 357, note. Uriah became a legendary character; but his name is to be found in the oldest lists of *gibborim.* 2 Samuel, ch. xxiii. v. 38. † See 2 Samuel, ch. xxi. v. 1–14.

‡ Note the name of Uriah.

§ 2 Samuel, ch. xxi. v. 3, 6, 9, a very ancient story. See above, pp. 45–48. || See below, pp. 47, 48.

¶ For the *eben Bohan* see Clermont-Ganneau in the *Revue Archéo.*, 1870–71, August, p. 116, and *Palestine Expl. Fund,* 1874, p. 80 and following.

was all the easier because Benjamin was small and consisted merely of a few military fiefs. Royalty attached these fiefs to itself, and Benjamin thus became a sort of royal domain at the gates of Jerusalem. The other tribes almost abdicated before Joseph or Ephraim. Thus everything was concentrated between Ephraim and Judah. But the union between these two great halves of the nationality of Israel was only on the surface. The power of David was very slight in the northern tribes. The growing importance of Jerusalem excited a jealous feeling in these tribes, of which the Jebusite hill was in no sense the capital. The glory of David filled with joy the people of Hebron, of Bethlehem, and even of Benjamin, despite bitter memories of Saul; in the North, it excited only indifference or ill-feeling. One can see that the disruption of Israel will take place at this imperfect splice, which left ever visible the primitive duality of the Beni-Jakob and the Beni-Joseph.*

* See vol. i. pp. 94, 117, 119, 207 and following.

CHAPTER II.

MILITARY ORGANISATION.

It was in war, more especially, that the nascent kingdom of Israel inaugurated a new era, essentially different from earlier times. The strong force which David had got together at Adullam and at Ziklag became the nucleus of an excellent permanent army, which enjoyed, in its time, supremacy through all the south of Syria. Up to that time, Israel had been exposed to perpetual attacks from its neighbours, and had always proved itself inferior to the Philistines. Now, the Philistines are about to be subdued, and the neighbouring peoples made tributary. Israel is about to form a regular kingdom, dwelling in safety behind its frontiers, and for a time exercising dominion over neighbouring states.

What had characterised the epoch of the Judges, and had led to the defeats of Israel, were the want of precaution and the inferiority of arms. David made an ample provision of weapons of defence, which were stored in the citadel of Jerusalem.*

* Song of Solomon, ch. iv. v. 4.

Up to that time, the *gibbor* had owned his own arms, which, in consequence, were often of inferior quality or badly cared for. The man of war was now equipped by the king, and those innumerable episodes where the Philistine, with a strong helmet, a long lance, and perfected cuirass, mocked at the Israelite, armed with nothing but a sling or a short sword,* did not again occur.

An army, in ancient times, could nearly always trace its origin to a band of robbers, or what amounts to the same thing, to men who were unwilling to work and who determined to live upon the work of others. As a matter of course, these brigands, once their authority was recognised over a certain area of country, became the natural protectors of those who laboured for them. It was in this way that order was established in the land by the brigand converted into a policeman. The men who succeeded, conjointly with David, in making Israel a country, had shared his adventurous career. These men, nearly all Bethlehemites or Benjaminites, were compelled above all things to be well armed; the pillage of the Amalekites helped them very much in this.† Many energetic individuals belonging to the neighbouring tribes joined forces with them. The Canaanites or the Hittites appear to have occupied in the coalition much the same footing as the Israelites.‡ There were also Arabs, Arameans,

* See vol. i. pp. 317, 318, and 2 Samuel, ch. xxi. and xxiii.
† Ibid. pp. 315-317.
‡ See above, p. 8.

and Ammonites.* Lastly the Philistines, as we shall see, formed a considerable contingent.

Among these companions, whom the son of Jesse was able to group around him by dint of tact and winning ways, but above all by obtaining handsome profits for them, one man stood head and shoulders above all the rest by his military capacity, and that was Joab, the son of Zeruiah,† who was the lieutenant of David in all his warlike expeditions, as he had been the principal instrument of his fortune. His brother Abishai ably seconded him. The devotion of these men to their chief had no limits. David was personally very brave, but he was small of stature, and does not appear to have been able to endure much fatigue. One day, in an expedition against the Philistines which started from Jerusalem, he was obliged to halt at Nob; ‡ and upon this occasion he had a near escape from being killed by a Philistine. From this moment his comrades did what they could to prevent him from exposing himself, assuring him that his life was too valuable to be thus risked, in reality because the presence of their ancient chief, who had become a king and slightly obese, was a hindrance to them, and hampered the celerity of their movements.

* 2 Samuel, ch. xxiii. The names of tribes which we find in the list of the *gibborim* often appear to have no connection with Israel. Unfortunately, these names have been a good deal contorted by different copyists.

† See vol. i. p. 351.

‡ 2 Samuel, ch. xxi. v. 15–17. I read: וישב בנוב ואיש מילידי.

A singular emulation for military glory sprang up among these men, who, having no other calling than that of the battle-field, became professional soldiers, wholly engrossed in relating their prowess and in outdoing one another. The *gibborim* (heroes, braves) became, as it were, a select group, to which it was the general ambition to belong. There was a sort of Legion of Honour, composed of thirty of the most illustrious of David's paladins. Among them were three, the most illustrious of all, Joab excepted, these being Jasobeam the Hacmonite, the son of Dado* the Ahohite, Shammah, the son of Agé the Havarite, all of the tribe of Judah or of Benjamin. Several writers placed Abishai and Benaiah in the same category. In the lifetime of David himself, as it would appear, lists were written out, not always concording with one another, with the names of these heroes, and the little military anecdotes relating to each of them.† Other military anecdotes of the time have been handed down to us, as it would seem, by the same hand which traced the list of the *gibborim*, notably that related in 2 Samuel, ch. xxi. v. 15–22.‡

* Same name as David.

† See for these anecdotes, 2 Samuel, ch. xxi. and xxiii., comparing the parallel passages of 1 Chronicles, ch. xi.; also the briefer narratives in ch. v. and viii.

‡ The text in 2 Samuel, ch. xxi. speaks of two battles at Gob and one at Gath. But there is no such locality as Gob, and the references must all be to Nob.

CHAPTER III.

PART PLAYED BY THE PHILISTINES IN THE ORGANISATION OF ISRAEL.

THESE notes of an epoch which never reached its zenith, give us a feature of the heroic life of Israel in the eleventh century B.C., singularly like that depicted in Homer's poems of the heroic life of the Greeks during the same period. This resemblance is partly due, perhaps, to the fact that the Philistines, who were, in respect to military matters, the masters of Israel,* were themselves a people of Carian or Cretan origin, very analogous to the Pelasgi, and having certain points in common with the forces of the Trojan cycle.† The other epic tale of Israel, that of Samson, also had its origin in the close contact of Israel with the Philistines. One might imagine that the Philistines possessed offshoots of

* Compare Exodus, ch. xiii. v. 7.

† See vol. i. pp. 133, 134, 281, 282. See especially Genesis, ch. x. v. 14, taking note of the transposition, and Amos, ch. ix. v. 7. The comparison of *Akis* and *Anchises*, insufficient of itself, acquires, when taken in conjunction with other resemblances, a certain amount of plausibility.

the Homeric cycle, and inspired the epic spirit among their surroundings.

One main fact, the consequence of which cannot well be exaggerated, is the part which the Philistines seem to have had in the organising work of Israel. This is not the only instance in history of the hereditary enemy becoming, as it were, the educator of the rival nation. The struggle against the Philistines had brought about the royalty of Israel; David had passed eighteen months of his life in the service of the king of Gath, and he had learnt in this school some of the lessons which had constituted his strength. Gath continued to supply him with trustworthy counsellors and auxiliaries.* Obed-Edom, whose house for a time sheltered the ark, was a man of Gath. Much is to be learnt from those with whom one is at war. The remarkably open intellect of David freed itself, thanks to his continuous relations with a race more warlike than Israel, from the petty strategical system which the Semitic tribes had so much difficulty in shaking off.

The first years of David's reign were spent in carrying on the wars which had occupied that of Saul. We have seen how that unfortunate sovereign ended his reign and his life in an expedition which the Philistines had undertaken as far as the plains of Jezreel, and the object of which it is not easy to understand. What was the outcome of the battle of Gilboa? What was the victorious army doing so far from its

* 2 Samuel, ch. xv. v. 18 and following. See below, pp. 20, 21.

centre of operations? We cannot tell. It is probable that the victory of the Philistines was without any durable results, for we know that the campaigns of David after he became king, and of his lieutenants, all took place, not in the direction of Jezreel, but upon the very frontiers of the land of the Philistines, towards Nob, and on the plain which is called "the plain of the Rephaïm."*

The narrative of these expeditions has preserved in the Bible the most antique form.† Iahveh shows himself therein an accomplished strategist, and himself takes part in the combat. The battle of Baal-Perazim, especially, left very abiding recollections.‡ When the Philistines learnt that David had been anointed king of all Israel, they sought to seize him. David learnt this, and he took refuge in the fortress of Zion.§ The Philistines, having failed to seize him, marched over the plain of the Rephaïm. David consulted Iahveh, saying: "Shall I march against the Philistines? Wilt thou deliver them into my hands?" Iahveh replied in the affirmative, and the Philistines were completely defeated; they fled, leaving upon the field of battle their religious insignia, which fell into the hands of David.

* Plain to the S.W. of Jerusalem.

† 2 Samuel, ch. v. v. 17 and following. Military anecdotes relative to this campaign in the list of the *gibborim*, 2 Samuel, ch. xxiii. v. 13 and following.

‡ Allusion to this battle in Isaiah, ch. xxviii. v. 21.

§ וירד, defective reading, as the compiler of the Chronicles readily saw. A verb is required in the sense of ויחש.

Upon another occasion, the Philistines came up and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaïm. And David consulted Iahveh, who said: "Thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees.* And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that thou shalt bestir thyself, for then shall the Lord go out before thee to smite the host of the Philistines. And David did so, as the Lord had commanded him, and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gezer."† Other expeditions also took place, but we have not any details of them.‡

Nob, at the gates of Jerusalem, was the theatre of many of these heroic struggles.§ The legends attaching to this spot related, generally, to the single combats between the Israelites and the Philistine giants. David, in course of time, absorbed in his own person all these legends. It was supposed that in his youth, sustained by the might of Iahveh, he had overcome with his sling one of these monsters clad in mail.‖

From the time of David, the Philistines, while still maintaining their military existence in their five military cities, and occasionally proving disagreeable neighbours, cease to be a permanent danger for Israel.

* Bekaïm in the Hebrew (a kind of tree difficult to identify).

† 2 Samuel, ch. v. v. 22–25.

‡ Ibid. ch. vi. v. 1. The sequel has been suppressed.

§ Ibid. ch. xxi. v. 18.

‖ 1 Samuel, ch. xvii. v. 2 and following.

David subjugated but did not conquer them. It is not quite certain, even, that he carried war into the Philistine cantons, properly so called, or that he took a single one of their cities.* But he quite stopped their plundering Israel, and took out of their hands the "yoke of the hegemony."† The Philistines were the only enemies with whom David observed the laws of moderation.. He was conscious of what he owed to them, and it may be that the experience he had had of their military superiority inspired him with a certain amount of contempt for the small Hebraic and Aramean bands. This appreciation of so finished a soldier suggested to him an idea which had a decisive influence upon the constitution of the Israelite royalty.

Nearly all the Semitic states required, if they were to endure, the support of a foreign body of troops,‡ the Semitic race of Arab type, owing to its anarchical habits, being incapable of furnishing gendarmes, or a body-guard. Thus it was that the Caliphate of Bagdad, as far back as the ninth century, was obliged to take Turkish troops into its service, as no Arab was prepared to have a hand in imprisoning another Arab, still less in putting him to death.

* 2 Samuel, ch. xxi. v. 20. נת is for גוב, or נוב. The passage in 1 Chronicles, ch. xviii. v. 1 is an unexplained change of the obscure passage. 2 Samuel, ch. viii. v. 1, compare 1 Kings, ch. ii. v. 39.

† Ibid. ch. viii. v. 1, altered in Chronicles.

‡ Ibid. v. 18; ch. xx. v. 7; 1 Kings, ch. i. v. 38 and 44; 1 Chronicles, ch. xviii. v. 17.

It was, as it would appear, some such ideas as these which induced David to raise among the Philistines a body of mercenaries whom he made his body-guard, and entrusted with all executions. They were called the *Kreti-Pleti*. The word *Creti* designated the Philistines as natives of Crete;* the word *Pleti* is supposed to be a popular abbreviation for *Plesti* (Philistines). Carians,† whether distinct or not from the Philistines, appear also to have figured among these bodies of foreign troops hired for the service of the kings of Israel. Finally, we find in the Israelite army a body of Gittites, or men of Gath.‡ The primitive Aryan soldier equalled the Hebrew-Arab Semite in valour, he surpassed him in fidelity, and he was essential for the solid foundation of any rule.

The *Kreti-Pleti* appear to us as having much analogy with the Germani, who formed the body-guard of the Roman emperors; with the Swiss, who formed the body-guard of the kings of France and of Naples; with the Scythians, who were employed in the same capacity by the Greeks. These *Kreti-Pleti* had as their chief Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada,§ who figures among the *sar-saba*, and they

* 1 Samuel, ch. xxx. v. 14; Ezekiel, ch. xxv. v. 16, and the texts relating to Caphtor, Genesis, ch. x. v. 14; Amos, ch. ix. v. 7; Jeremiah, ch. xlvii. v. 4; Deuteronomy, ch. ii. v. 23.

† 2 Kings, ch. xi. v. 4 and 19, and the *ketib* of 2 Samuel, ch. xx. v. 23. For the part played by the Carians as mercenaries, see Herodotus, ii. 152; v. 66, 111; Livy, xxxvii. 40.

‡ 2 Samuel, ch. xv. v. 18 and following.

§ Ibid. ch. viii. v. 18 (read על instead of ו); ch. xx. v. 23.

were only formed, as it would appear, towards the close of David's reign. The list of the *gibborim* does not make mention of them,* and designates the functions of Benaiah by another name. After David's reign, the force may have existed under the same name, although no longer composed solely of Philistines, just as certain Swiss Guards may have been composed of soldiers who were not natives of Helvetia.

The importance assumed by the *Kreti-Pleti* or *Çarim* was soon very marked. It was they who foiled the attempts made by Absalom, by Sheba the son of Bichri, and by Adonijah; it was they who ensured the succession to Solomon. Although Gath never belonged to David,† the Gittites, especially a certain Ittai, appear to have been on terms of the closest intimacy with him.‡ Quite strangers to the theocratic spirit—perhaps even to the very worship of Iahveh—more of strangers still to the old patriarchal spirit which made the true Israelite so refractory to the monarchical principle, these *sbirri* were almost the only force upon which royalty, always being opposed by the prophets—those reactionary utopists—could depend. In default of a national military

* The *Kreti-Pleti* and the *gibborim* are mentioned as distinct bodies, 2 Samuel, ch. xx. v. 7.

† Compare 1 Kings, ch. ii. v. 39 (there is some error in 2 Kings, ch. xii. v. 18); Amos, ch. vi. v. 2; the passages, 1 Chronicles, ch. xviii. v. 1, and 2 Chronicles, ch. xi. v. 8, are of little value.

‡ 2 Samuel, ch. xv. v. 19 and following; ch. xviii. v. 2 and following.

class, they constituted a public force detested by the theocrats, but none the less a very necessary force—for there is no one more in need of the gendarme than your utopist—for the provisional maintenance of an endurable present, pending the establishment of an ideal perfection which never comes.

A nation is only formed by the violent extinction of divergent elements. The extinction of divergencies rarely takes place without a nucleus of foreign military forces ; for a foreign force has more power than the native soldier to make people agree, to overcome internal opposition and separatist tendencies. The Philistines furnished this cementing element for Israel. In so doing, they were only continuing the profession of mercenary, which appears to have been their original calling.* About the time of the struggles between Assyria and Egypt, they were crushed, like Israel, by the passage of large armies. They had, however, a singular piece of good fortune. Nearer to the coast, and better known to the Greeks than the Israelites were, they gave their name to the country ; the land of Israel was designated in the world under the name of the land of the Philistines (Palestine).† It rarely happens that a powerful influence exercised by one nation upon another does not leave its trace behind it in words. Many Philistine words were doubtless introduced into Hebrew, at the time of David. The language of the Philistines was, as we have

* See vol. i. pp. 133, 134.

† Παλαιστίνη, Herodotus.

said,* a Pelasgic dialect, inclining at one time towards Greek, at another towards Latin. I am inclined to believe that it is to this profound influence of the Philistines over Israel, about 1000 B.C., that must be attributed the introduction into Hebrew of those words in appearance Greek or Latin, which designate nearly all military or exotic objects, and which are to be found in nearly all the ancient texts. Such are *prbr* or *prbl*,† in which I think that I can detect the word *peribolos*, the circuit of the fortifications of a city, the suburb; *mekéra*, equivalent to *machæra*, sword; possibly *mekona*, which would mean *machina*;‡ *liska*, which has quite the same meaning as *lesché*; *captor*, which reminds one of *capital*;§ and especially that singular word *pellex*, with the meaning of *courtezan*,|| which formed part of the Semitic languages from the very earliest period.¶

* See vol. i. pp. 133, 134.

† פרבר, פרור, פרול.

‡ מכנה, designating the rollers of the Temple basins, is punctuated מְכֹנָה by the Massoretes; this is, no doubt, an artificial etymology.

§ כפתר perhaps for כפתל, as פרבר for פרבל.

|| פילגש. The reader will remark the Latin analogy of several of these words.

¶ Is it not surprising that the spot in Jerusalem from which pestilential exhalations arose should be called Aorna or Averna (Araunah)? See 2 Samuel, ch. xxiv. v. 16; *ketib* and Septante Ὀρνά.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WARS OF DAVID.

The victorious struggle against the Philistines, and still more, the introduction into the Israelite army of a strong element of Philistine mercenaries, gave this army a strength which it had never possessed before. Inured to war by adversaries of this stamp, and reinforced by auxiliaries who brought with them the qualities of another race, David's forces enjoyed an unquestionable superiority over the small neighbouring nations of the land of Canaan, as the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Edomites were made to feel. The wars of David with these tribes were of a very different character from his campaigns against the Philistines. There was something chivalrous about these latter; they were the struggles of young and proud heroes, both equally ready to risk their lives. The wars against the other Semitic tribes were of atrocious ferocity. With the Philistines David is an Ulysses or a Diomed, making use of all his means of superiority against the enemy, but treating him as an equal. With the other Hebrew

tribes he was a very Agathocles, resorting to cruelty as a means of pressure. These wars, resembling those of the Red Indians, are related by the contemporary writer with revolting impassiveness. A vanquished people was in those days like a vanquished god; there was none to pity it.

We do not know what grievance David had against Moab, a land of which he was a native upon one side of his ancestry,* and to which, in the first period of his life, he had applied to do him a marked service.† The war against Moab left recollections behind it, the chief of which, viz., the obscure anecdote of the Ariel of Moab, referred to Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada.‡ David treated a population which was so closely connected with him with terrible cruelty.§ All the Moabites were made to lie in a line upon the ground, and he killed two-thirds, leaving the other alive.|| Moab was reduced to a state of vassaldom, and condemned to pay tribute to Israel.

Edom also was made to feel the weight of David's arms.¶ The Edomites were defeated in the Valley of

* That is to say, if the fundamental basis of the Book of Ruth is not fictitious.

† See vol. i. p. 337.

‡ 2 Samuel, ch. xxiii. v. 23. It is impossible to tell the meaning of this, and the Mesa inscription (lines 12, 17, 18) does not elucidate the point.

§ This refers, no doubt, to the army.

|| 2 Samuel, ch. viii. v. 2.

¶ Ibid. v. 13 and 14 (corrected by the Greek), comparing with 1 Chronicles, ch. xviii. v. 12 and 13; 1 Kings, ch. xi. v. 14 and following; Psalm lx.

Salt, to the south of the Dead Sea. The land was occupied, and Edom became subject to Israel. Joab was entrusted with the extermination of the race, and he acquitted himself of his task with his cold-blooded cruelty. The king was killed; his son Hadad, or Hadar, fled with several of his father's officers by way of the desert of Paran. He took with him a great many men out of Paran, and they came to Egypt, where Hadad found much favour with Pharaoh, who gave him a house and lands and married him to the sister of his wife Tahpenes,* by whom he had a son Genubath. The latter was brought up in the king's palace, with the king's sons.†

The struggle against the Ammonites presented a peculiar character of gravity, and led to wars upon distant territories which Israel had never before invaded. Nahas, the king vanquished by Saul, had rendered some service to David. After the death of Nahas, David sent some of his officers to condole with Hanun, the son and successor of Nahas. The Ammonite chiefs were very ill-disposed, and maintained that these ambassadors were spies, sent to prepare for an attack upon Rabbath-Ammon. The envoys were accordingly treated with great indignity. The Ammonites, being persuaded that David would take vengeance for the indignity put upon his representatives, sought for aid from the populations of the Hermon. They formed an alliance with the men of

* The text reads אחות תחפנים. It should doubtless be אחותפנים.

† 1 Kings, ch. xi. v. 14 and following.

Tob, with the king of Maacah,* and with the Aramean peoples of Rehob† and Zoba,‡ who supplied them with a strong contingent of troops.

This amounted to a sort of coalition of the populations to the east and north of Palestine, alarmed, as they well might be, by the growing force of the new kingdom. All the allied army gathered before Rabbath-Ammon.§ The Ammonites defended the city and its gates. The Israelite forces advanced under the command of Joab. This able leader divided his army into two corps; one of them, under the command of Abishai, was to attack the city; the other, under his own orders, was to fall upon the Arameans scattered about in the country outside. The Arameans fled in disorder, and when the Ammonites saw this they took refuge in their city, and Joab, making no attempt to force his way in, returned to Jerusalem.

But the consequences of the Aramean populations of the Hermon and the Anti-Lebanon thus entering

* The Maacah, or Beth-Maacah, was the region of the Jordan above its entrance into Lake Hule. Maacah, like Rehob, ranked in David's time among the Aramean peoples.

† Rehob, or Beth-Rehob, probably is the modern Wadi-Hasbani, or region of the Upper Jordan, at the foot of Mount Hermon.

‡ The site of Aram-Zoba is doubtful; in my opinion, it is the Sofa, formerly much more populated than it is now. The Aram-Zoba unquestionably adjoined the Aram-Dammesk and the land of Ammon. Compare Schrader, pp. 182, 183. It could not be, as was supposed, in the north of Syria. Saul made war there. 1 Samuel, ch. xiv. v. 37. Compare 1 Chronicles, ch. xviii. v. 3. See vol. i. p. 407, note 2.

§ Now Ammon, upon the route of the Mecca pilgrimage. Soci, *Pal.*, p. 319.

the field were not to end here. The Arameans of Zoba, Damascus, Rehob, and Maacah again joined forces against Israel.* Hadarezer, king of Aram-Zoba, was at the head of the coalition. Shobach, the captain of the host, led the army, and David came in person to meet this formidable foe. He passed the Jordan at the head of all the army of Israel, and gave battle, doubtless in the direction of the Ledja. The victory was a complete one, and Shobach was killed.† David, it is said, took 1,700 horsemen and 20,000 footmen. He houghed the horses of the chariots, and kept only a hundred for himself. Up to that time, Israel had neither cavalry nor war chariots. David doubtless thought that these complicated methods were unsuitable to his *gibborim*, who had remained in many respects faithful to the ancient military practices of Judah and Benjamin.

The Aram of Damascus, the Aram-Zoba, the Aram-Maacah, and all the vassal kings of Hadarezer, become subjects and tributaries to Israel. David left

* 2 Samuel, ch. viii. v. 3 and following; ch. x. v. 15–17. These two passages are two narratives of the same war. The efforts to make of חילם the name of a town have all failed, inclusive of Sayce's attempt to identify it with Aleppo (*The Academy*, Sept. 1, 1883). Naharaim (2 Samuel, ch. x. v. 15, and Psalm lx. vi. 1) is an error. Rehob, taken to mean the name of a man (2 Samuel, ch. viii. v. 3, 12), is clearly the outcome of some confusion.

† It would seem to appear from 2 Samuel, ch. viii. v. 3 (compare I Chronicles, ch. xviii. v. 3), that David marched in the direction of the Euphrates. The passage is an obscure one, but, in any event, it is of no historical importance.

garrisons in all these Aramean countries,* which were very rich; so he took the golden bucklers of Hadarezer's officers and brought them to Jerusalem. At Tebah and at Berothaï, cities of Hadarezer, David found a large quantity of brass, which he also seized. At that epoch the wealth of a city or of a nation consisted chiefly in vessels of gold or of brass. War indemnities were levied by carrying off vessels of brass, which were broken up to make them easier of transport.†

Toi, king of the Canaanite city of Hamath, an enemy of Hadarezer, having learnt of David's victory, sent his son Hadadram to salute him. Hadadram took with him vessels of gold, of silver, and of brass, which also went to swell the treasure at Jerusalem.‡

The Aramean expedition had a great effect upon the public mind, and, upon his return, David raised a monument, doubtless at Jerusalem, to perpetuate the memory of it.§ The sphere of Israel's relations expanded, and the people began to get some conception of worlds which were beyond the visual horizon of their ancestors. The field of the expedition had been a somewhat limited one. David had not gone beyond

* 2 Samuel, ch. viii. v. 14. Be careful not to confuse אדם and ארם. Compare verse 13 and Psalm lxxvi. v. 11 (Grætz).

† Unknown cities, in the direction of the Saïa, 2 Kings, ch. xxv. v. 13. *Corpus inscrip. Semit.*, part i., No. 5.

‡ 2 Samuel, ch. viii. v. 9 and following; 1 Chronicles, ch. xviii. v. 9 and following (הדורם for הדדרם).

§ Ibid. v. 13; meaning doubtful.

the Aramean circle to the north of Palestine, Zoba, Damascus, Maacah, and Rehob; but the noise of Israel had spread to the Orontes; the land of Hamath was alarmed thereat. The names of countries hitherto unknown began to be bruited abroad.

With the aid of imagination it was afterwards asserted that David had got as far as the Euphrates, and had marched in triumph through lands which never saw a *gibbor*. This was an exaggeration; the Israelite arms did not get beyond Hasbeya or Rascheya, to the north; while to the east they did not go farther than Damascus, the region of the tells and Safa.*

The conquered Arameans ceased helping the Ammonites. In the following year, "at the time when kings go forth to do battle," David sent Joab beyond Jordan, with all the army of Israel. Joab ravaged the land of Ammon.† He had little difficulty in capturing the lower part of the town, situated upon the brink of the river. He still had to take the upper part of the town, which included the royal residence. Joab, by an act of adulation, which shows how thoroughly royalty was established in Israel, sent to inform David, "lest I take the city and it be called

* The passage 2 Samuel, ch. viii. v. 3, is obscure; the passage 1 Chronicles, ch. xviii. v. 3, gives a very arbitrary explanation of it. Any exact ideas as to the situation of Zoba were lost from a very early date, and this was what gave rise to the supposition of David having made expeditions in the north of Syria.

† It is to be observed that 2 Samuel, ch. xi. v. 1, and ch. xii. v. 26, should succeed each other.

after my name." David then came and took the city. He took the king's crown, enriched with precious stones, from off his head, and placed it on his own. The booty was enormous. "And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick kiln ; and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon."

Cruelty has always formed part and parcel of warfare in the East. Terror is considered in that part of the world as a force. The Assyrians, in the bas-reliefs of their palaces, represent the tortures of their defeated foes as a glorious deed. The kingdom of the saints, moreover, was not founded by saints. There was nothing, at the epoch of which I am treating, to mark out Israel for a special vocation of piety and justice.

History has been completely distorted in representing David as the head of a powerful kingdom, which embraced nearly the whole of Syria.* David was king of Judah and of Israel, and that was all ; the neighbouring peoples, Hebrews, Canaanites, Arameans and Philistines, as far as Mahul Hermon and the desert, were sternly subjected, and were more or less its tributaries. In reality, with the exception, perhaps, of the small town of Ziklag,† David did not

* Note the conception of David's kingdom in Amos, ch. ix. v. 12.

† The hesitations as to the attribution of Ziklag to the tribes of Judah or of Simeon (Joshua, ch. xv. v. 31 ; ch. xix. v. 5) show that these passages were compiled after David's time.

annex any non-Israelite country to the domain of Israel. The Philistines, the Edomites, the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Arameans of Zoba, of Damascus, of Rehob and of Maacah were, after his day, very much what they were before, only a little weaker. Conquest was not a characteristic of Israel, the taking possession of the Canaanite lands was an act of a different order, and it came to be more and more regarded as the execution of a decree of Iahveh. As this decree did not extend to the lands of Edom, of Moab, of Ammon and of Aram, the Israelites deemed themselves justified in treating the Edomites, the Moabites, the Ammonites and the Arameans with the utmost severity, in carrying off their precious stones and objects of price, but not in taking their land,* or in changing their dynasty. None of the methods employed by great empires such as Assyria was known to these small peoples, which had scarcely got beyond the status of tribes. They were as cruel as Assur, but much less politic and less capable of a general plan.

The impression produced by the appearance of this new royalty was none the less extraordinary. The halo of glory which enveloped David remained like a star upon the forehead of Israel. We possess so little poetry of these remote times that the glory of David has only descended to us by means of songs which are of much more recent composition ; an echo of the ancient lyrical spirit has,

* Judges, ch. xi.

however, come down to us in the traditional canticles, wherein the name of Judah nearly always elicits an outburst of enthusiasm.*

The rhymed oracles of Balaam were like couplets open to every kind of national emotion. Among the parables of the pagan prophet, one of the most striking is that beginning: "I shall see him, but not now." †

It is, of course, possible that David, who was fond of poetry, may have composed some songs expressive of his feeling of triumph and his gratitude towards Iahveh. But it does not seem as if any of the Psalms could well be attributed to him, with the exception of the eighteenth, which was ascribed to him in the time of Hezekiah.‡ The greater part of this is the work of an anavite or a pietist. There are, however, a few verses of which it may be said that, if David did not write them, he must, at all events, have often given utterance to similar thoughts. A fragment, repeated in two of the Psalms,§ would be more likely to represent a poetic outpouring of the time of the first king of Israel.

For centuries this dithyrambic style, based upon the sonorous nature of geographical names, and the skilful arrangement of a small number of poetical words, continued to flourish, almost in the same terms,

* Genesis, ch. xlix. v. 8–12.

† Numbers, ch. xxiv. v. 17, 18.

‡ 2 Samuel, ch. xxii.

§ Psalms lx. v. 8–11; cviii. v. 8–11. The temptation which one might feel to attribute Psalm cx. to David must be overcome. This point will be considered in vol. iii.

among the Semitic nations of Syria. The date of poems such as these is often difficult to determine, and it is nearly always of little interest to know. Whether the short extract referred to is by David or not matters but little, for if David did not compose it word for word, he chanted, or rather, he declaimed, in a manner which presented the most complete analogy with this piece.

CHAPTER V.

RELIGION UNDER DAVID.

The reign of David marked a considerable step forward in the progress of Iahveism.* David appears to have been a much more exclusive servant of Iahveh than Saul. Iahveh is his protector, and he does not desire any other. He has a compact with Iahveh, who is to give him the victory over his enemies, in return for his assiduous worship. Not a single movement of pure piety seems to have discovered itself in this essentially egotistical mind, closed against any disinterested idea. Between David and Iahveh, as between Mesa and Chemosh, there is an exchange of civilities, which is observed to the letter. Iahveh is a faithful god, solid and trustworthy; † David is a faithful servant, solid and trustworthy.‡ The successes of David are the successes

* The religious part of David's reign is only known to us by documents about 300 years more recent. The only item in them to be relied upon is the transfer of the ark to Zion, which might almost be inferred from the erection of the Temple of Solomon.

† Daibon inscription.

‡ Note the meaning of the word אמן, applicable alike to God and to man.

of Iahveh. The foundation of the new kingdom was thus considered to be a work of Iahveh. Iahveism and the dynasty of David were thus intimately associated with each other.

There is no moral sentiment, moreover, in the conception and worship of Iahveh, as understood by David. This capricious god is the very embodiment of partiality; his faithfulness is purely material; he is exacting as to his rights to an absurd degree. He gets angry with people for no apparent cause. Then he is made to sniff the smoke of the sacrifice, and his wrath is appeased.* When a man has sworn in his name to do some abominable deed, he insists upon the *herem* being fulfilled. He is a creature of the very narrowest intelligence; he delights in undeserved sacrifices. Although the rite of human sacrifices was repugnant to Israel, Iahveh took pleasure sometimes in these spectacles. The execution of the sons of Saul at Gibeah is a regular human sacrifice of seven persons, consummated in the presence of Iahveh, in order to appease him.† The "wars of Iahveh" all end in terrible massacres, in honour of this cruel god.‡

Does this preference, ostentatiously proclaimed and almost affected, for Iahveh imply, on David's part, a formal negation of other gods? Assuredly not. A

* 1 Samuel, ch. xxvi. v. 19.

† 2 Samuel, ch. xxi. v. 6, 9, ליהוה, לפני יהוה. Compare לכמש רית. Mesa inscription, lines 11, 12.

‡ Compare Mesa, lines 16–18.

very ancient narrator* puts in his mouth, when he is persecuted, a speech in which he curses his enemies, who, by driving him out of the land of Iahveh, will compel him to serve strange gods; so completely was it an understood thing to practise the religion of the country in which you were sojourning. During his reign, David does not appear to have committed a single act of religious intolerance. Iahveh sometimes orders massacres and acts of savagery,† but he is not as yet fanatically bent upon his exclusive worship, as he will be later on. Not one of the atrocities which Iahveh enjoins upon David is for the purpose of driving out a rival god. Bath-sheba and Benaiah speak to David of Iahveh as of his patron or his household god, never as of an absolute god.‡ No divine denomination had as yet become exclusive of others. Among the names of the sons of David are several which are written indifferently *Baal* or *El*; thus, the one who is called *Eliada* in certain historical texts, is denominated *Baaliada* in others.

A religious situation of this kind may be compared to that of an ardent Franciscan in the Middle Ages. Francis of Assisi had, in the eyes of his faithful followers, an immense superiority over all the other celestial patrons. They lost no opportunity of declaring that they did not desire any other protection

* 1 Samuel, ch. xxvi. v. 19.

† Note especially the episode of the numbering (2 Samuel, ch. xxiv., very old, by the same author as ch. xxi., episode of the sons of Saul crucified).

‡ 1 Kings, ch. i. v. 15 and following; v. 37 and following.

than his, that all other protections seemed to them of small account compared to his, and that they wished to owe their salvation to him alone—assertions which made them display a semblance of contempt for the other saints. But did this imply that in their idea, the churches of the other saints ought to be destroyed, and they driven out of Paradise? Not so; it was the ardent expression of an adulation which in form implied something not at all flattering towards the other superhuman personages, but which was not the direct negation of their existence. The most ardent Franciscan none the less invoked St. Roch in a time of pestilence, or St. Nicholas when he was making a sea voyage. So David may well have ostensibly worshipped only one protecting god, without seeing any reason why one of his sons should not be called Baaliada, why sacrifices should not be made to Milik upon the heights about Jerusalem, or why sacrifices should not be made alternately on the same spot to Iahveh, Baal, and Milik. Upon the Hebrew seals found at Jerusalem, which appear to date from the early days of the royalty, the compound *Milik* is often found.*

It is not directly, moreover, but indirectly, and by inference that David exercised an influence of the highest kind upon the religious direction of

* De Vogüé, *Mél. d'arch. Orient.*, p. 138; Levy C. (Breslau), *Gemmen*, pp. 38, 44; Clermont-Ganneau, in the *Journal Asiatique*, March, 1883, p. 130

Israel. By the building of Jerusalem, he created the future capital of Judaism, the first holy city in the world. This did not enter into his calculations. Zion, and the massive buildings which crowned it, were, in his view, a fortress and nothing more. Nevertheless, he laid the basis of the future religious destiny of this hill, for he began to centralise there the national worship. Iahveh slowly made his way towards the hill which he had chosen. Thanks to David, the ark of Israel found upon the hill of Zion a resting-place after its long wanderings.

We left the sacred ark at Kirjath-Jearim, in the house of Abinadab, upon the height. In consequence of the fatal battle of Afek,* the ark had been lost for Siloh and the tribe of Ephraim, which had hitherto had the guard of it. David was particularly anxious to endow his new capital with this object, the political importance of which his clear-sighted mind could not fail to apprehend.† The ceremony of translation was a solemn one. The distance from Kirjath-Jearim to Jerusalem is about five miles. A new cart was made, and on it was placed the precious coffer with its cherubim, oxen drawing it. The two sons of Abinadab, Uzzah and Ahio, went before the ark. David and all the people danced before Iahveh to the sound of cinnors, harps, timbrels, instruments made of fir wood, and cymbals.

* See vol. i. p. 304.

† 2 Samuel, ch. vi. A narrative true in substance, but environed with legendary details.

Iahveh was a terrible god; it was remembered that the Philistines would not keep so redoubtable a guest within their walls, and had sent him about his business. An accident which occurred in the cortège cast a chill over the joyous enthusiasm of the people. One of the sons of Abinadab, or perhaps only one of the men in the procession, fell down senseless and, it is said, died. This was taken as a mark of the displeasure of Iahveh, and the procession was stopped. "David was afraid of the Lord that day," and being unwilling to bring the ark to Zion, he had it placed in the house of Obed-edom,* which must have been somewhere to the north-west of the present city. Obed-edom was one of the Gittites who had attached themselves to David and followed his fortunes. It was, perhaps, thought that as he was not an Israelite, Iahveh would be less exacting and severe towards him than towards those who had a more special pact with him; perhaps, too, Obed-edom, a stranger to the religion of Iahveh, was less alarmed at the responsibilities which he was incurring, and raised no difficulties.

The accident on the way soon gave rise to legends. It was said that Uzzah, seeing the oxen stagger and the ark on the point of falling, put out his hand to keep it steady. But Iahveh was as unwilling to be touched as to be looked upon. He did not like any one to interfere with his affairs,

* A peculiar name. We may perhaps read Abdadam. Compare *Corpus inscr. Semit.*, part i., No. 295, and *Journal Asiat.*, April–June, 1887, pp. 469–471 (Berger).

even to assist him. He struck down Uzzah "for his error, and there he died." The names of places were made the subjects of remark. The place where the mishap occurred was called Perez-uzzah, and there was close by there a threshing-floor called Gorn-Nachon, or Gorn-Kidon, and these names were supposed to have some unlucky meaning.

The ark remained three months in the house of Obed-edom, and was a source of blessing for this house. David accordingly changed his mind, and, seeing that the ark carried good fortune with it, determined to have it in his city of Zion. The distance was very short, so David arranged to have it carried by hand, the translation being attended with even more pomp and ceremony than on the previous occasion. At every six paces oxen and fatlings were sacrificed. David, girded with a linen ephod, danced with all his might before the Lord; and all Israel danced and shouted to the sound of the trumpet and of stringed instruments. The ark was thus brought to Zion, where a tabernacle had been pitched for it, doubtless in the Millo, beside the palace.*

We can still distinguish the rhythm of these sacred dances in a canticle, several times remodelled, which is preserved to us in the Book of Psalms. The first verses carry us back to the earliest periods in the worship of Israel.†

* 2 Samuel, ch. vi. v. 16.

† Psalm lxviii. v. 1, 2, 4, 7, 15, 16, 17, 25, 26, 27, 33, 34. Some of the verses may also have served for the inauguration of

Numerous sacrifices were offered. To every one was distributed a cake of bread, a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine. The women and the people were delighted to see David dance with them. The women of the harem, on the contrary, could not keep from smiling. Michal, the daughter of Saul, looked through the window and saw her husband leaping and dancing before Iahveh, according to the ancient custom, to the great delight of the serving women and common people; and she despised him in her heart. In answer to her taunts, David very sensibly replied that he preferred to be "base in mine own sight; and of the handmaidens which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be held in honour. And therefore, Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child unto the day of her death."*

This pretty story seems to have been hatched in the prophetic world in the time of Hezekiah. It appears to respond to the antipathy of Hamoutal and the women of the court for Iahveist devotions, and to the sort of human respect which prevented people of standing from taking part in them. If David answered Michal as he is said to have done, he was certainly right over and over again. By bringing the ark to Jerusalem he completed a very important stroke of policy.

Solomon's Temple. The Psalm in question appears to be composed of liturgical fragments belonging to different epochs.

* 2 Samuel, ch. vi. v. 22, 23.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ARK AT ZION.

FROM the day on which the ark thus became his neighbour and almost his vassal, David was essentially the chosen one of Iahveh and of Israel. His royalty assumed a religious character, which that of Saul did not possess. David was the elect of Iahveh; his function was that of a lieutenancy of Iahveh. The idea of the royalty by divine right was thus founded. Everything was permissible to the king, who gave Iahveh a settled dwelling-place at the door of his own residence. In return for this service, Iahveh was about to accord him what was then the most highly appreciated and rarest privilege,* that of seeing his posterity seated upon his throne, by a species of undisputed devolution.

This it was which constituted the great consecration of David, as it was also the consecration of the hill of Zion.

Henceforth, the ark remained stationary. It was

* We have the list of the kings of Edom (Genesis, ch. xxxvi. v. 31 and following.) Not one of them is a son of his predecessor.

accepted that, among so many mountains which in appearance were much better designed for the purpose, it was the little hill of Zion which had been chosen by Iahveh. And why? Because it was little, and because Iahveh, being very mighty and strong, loves the small and the weak, who do not dare to display pride towards him. To have the ark close by, to be the neighbour of Iahveh, and, in one sense, his guest, what higher favour could there be than this? In the religious conceptions of nearly all the Semitic peoples, the vicinity of the temple or altar of a god was regarded as a mark of great favour. These ancient gods had only a limited sphere of power; so much so that it was often necessary to remind them of one's existence.* This was what was expressed in the word *ger*, joined to the name of the divinity in names like *Gerel, Gero, Geresmun, Gerastoreth,* etc.† By this title of *ger*, a man became the protégé of the god; remaining under his shadow, within reach of his protection.‡ The divinity was often conceived as being winged; § between his wings, evil could not come nigh you. The close neighbourhood of a god was, in consequence, very much sought after. How much more so, then, must

* See *Revue Archéo.*, June, 1879.

† See *Revue des études Juives*, Oct., Nov., Dec., 1882, pp. 167, 168; *Corpus inscr. Semit.*, part i., p. 95, vol. i.

‡ Psalm xci. v. 1.

§ Psalms xvii. v. 8; xxxvi. v. 8; lvii. v. 2; lxi. v. 5; lxii. v. 8. Compare the Palestrina patera, *Corpus inscr. Semit.*, part i., No. 164 plate xxxvi.

be the advantage of having been, so to speak, by one's side, of being master of his oracles. The Israelitish imagination bent strongly in this direction, as in the first verse of the fifteenth Psalm.

The depositing of the ark in its tabernacle upon Mount Zion marked, therefore, a decisive moment in Jewish history, much more so in one sense than the erection of the temple itself. One of these acts was, moreover, the consequence of the other. In order to facilitate the sacrifices, an altar was raised in front of the tabernacle. It was an altar hewn in stone, with *acroteria* (horns).* It would appear that David had often thought of erecting a permanent house of stone around the ark.† The idea of these houses for the gods, very ancient in Egypt,‡ was then gradually making its way all through the world. The Greeks took to it, and raised small habitations for their *xoana*. The ancient Canaanite populations had no temples, but Tyre and Sidon, more influenced by Egypt, had; and so had the Philistines.§ Even if texts—which are modern, it is true—did not tell us that David had formed the idea of building a house for the accommodation of the *aron*, we should have had to suppose so *à priori*. The precious metals which David brought back from his expeditions against the Arameans, the Ammonites,

* 1 Kings, ch. i. v. 50.

† 2 Samuel, ch. vii.

‡ Ancient Assyria had no temple, properly so called.

§ Judges, ch. xvi. v. 23 and following; 1 Samuel, ch. v. v. 2 and following; ch. xxvi. v. 1.

and the other peoples, were consecrated to Iahveh, to be converted into religious utensils.* But the funds necessary for religious buildings were not yet secured. Perhaps, too, the momentary disorganisation which marked the last years of David's reign prevented the realisation of the design which he had formed. The survivors of the schools of prophets of Ramah were, moreover, very much opposed to the erection of a temple.† The original simplicity of their worship suited them much better. As to the northern tribes, they had every sort of political and religious reason for looking very unfavourably upon the erection of a temple at Jerusalem.

It is from David's era, too, that must date the first organisation, as yet a very primitive one, of the priesthood of Iahveh. Up to that time there had been no national priesthood in Israel. Each sanctuary had its *levis* and its *cohanim*, more or less hereditary, each having nearly an equal right to the ephod. The ark was far from being the only point where Iahveh could be found or consulted. While the ark was at Kirjath-Jearim, more particularly, there is nothing to show that it was a great religious centre. Abinadab and his sons were sufficient to carry on the worship. The priests of Silo and of Nob had more importance, the former descending from Eli, and the latter from that Ahimelech who gave to David the sword of Goliath, and whom Saul had put to death.

* 1 Samuel, ch. viii. v. 11, 12.

† Prescriptions of the Book of the Alliance, see below, p. 313.

By the translation of the ark to Jerusalem, the priesthood became a regularised institution. In the brief table which we possess of the great functionaries of David, following the *sar-saba*, the *sofer* and the *mazkir*, there come two *cohanim*, Zadok, the son of Ahitub,* and Ahimelech, the son of Abiathar, the priest of Nob.† A certain Ira the Jairite, whose name is found in the list of the *gibborim*,‡ is elsewhere styled "chief priest of David,"§ just as if it was some household post which he occupied. The priesthood, moreover, was still free. Thus, all the sons of David are called *cohanim*.||

David, therefore, prepared for the future unity in the place of worship and unity in the priesthood; but he did not make this unity a reality. The old religious places continued to flourish. Opposite to Jerusalem, upon the summit of Mount Olivet, Gad was still worshipped without any restriction.¶ At the very gate of his palace he, David, erected an altar under very special circumstances.** There was there a threshing floor which belonged to a Jebusite named Araunah or Avernah.†† An epidemic was

* 2 Samuel, ch. viii. v. 17; ch. xx. v. 25, 26.

† In even the oldest documents there was a good deal of confusion as to these personages. See vol. i. p. 420, note *.

‡ List of the *gibborim*, 2 Samuel, ch. xxiii.

§ 2 Samuel, ch. xx. v. 26. This should assuredly read היתרי. The confusion of א and ת was easy to make in the ancient text.

|| Ibid. ch. viii. v. 18.

¶ Ibid. ch. xv. v. 32.

** Ibid. ch. xxiv. v. 14 and following.

†† See above, pp. 9, 23 (note ¶).

decimating the city, and the angel of Iahveh was thought to be seen hovering over this spot with outstretched hand, ready to exterminate the people.* The prophet Gad advised that an altar should be erected, and Araunah, according to tradition, was anxious to give the site. David insisted upon buying it, as well as the oxen, the wooden instruments and all that served for the making of sacrifices. He then built the altar and offered burnt offerings upon it. The threshing floor of Araunah is the spot where the Temple of Solomon was built a few years later.

Silo, Bethel and Nob lost, owing to these innovations, a portion of their religious importance. Hebron, upon the contrary, remained the religious city of Judah. It was one of the principal centres of the worship of Iahveh; so much so that people repaired thither from Jerusalem to perform certain vows to Iahveh.† What, so far as we can judge, was centralised in the holy tabernacle, were consultations of the oracle. After David's time, we do not find any private ephod, or *urim* and *thummim*. Thanks to a certain amount of progress in public reason, and especially by the influence of the prophets, this gross and heathenish usage died out. Thus David was unconsciously working in the cause of religious progress. The religious sentiment does not seem to

* The compilation of this tradition not being very old, one might be tempted to see a connection between this mephitism and the name of *Averna* or *Orna;* but all this is very uncertain. See below, p. 113, note †.

† 2 Samuel, ch. xv. v. 8 and following.

have been stronger in David than it was in Saul, and his contemporaries. But his mind was more settled and stable, and he saw the inanity of certain superstitions in which the hapless Saul was immersed. In the early part of his life he made too lavish use of the ephod, like all the rest of his compatriots. After his definite establishment at Jerusalem, the resort to the *urim* and *thummim* seems to have been suppressed. The *teraphim*, closely connected with the ephod, also disappear.

We certainly possess, in the history of David, more than one page which was written in David's own time. These pages have a reasonable, almost a rationalist tone which cannot fail to strike the reader. There is not a single miracle, strictly speaking, in the history of David.* All the story of the revolt of Absalom, more especially, which is so coherent, and which can only be the work of a *mazkir*, does not comprise a single superstitious act, a single consultation of the ephod. The whole scene is described as taking place between men who discuss with one another like enlightened politicians and sensible soldiers;† the tone is one of enlightened piety, as in Fénelon's *Télémaque*. It is no longer the catchpenny religion of the time of the Judges, resembling in its gross materialism the Italiot or Gallic paganism.

* I am not referring, of course, to the prophetic legends, added afterwards.

† It is the same with 1 Kings, ch. i. This contains neither prophecies nor oracle.

The follies of the time of Samuel and David have gone out of date. Men's ideas became clarified; the ancient elohism, obliterated by the Iahveist scories, reappeared; a school of learned deists formed in Jerusalem around royalty.

The liturgy of these ancient times was very simple, and doubtless that of Iahveh did not differ from that which was said in honour of Baal or Milik. The prayers and the hymns consisted of those deprecative formulæ which fill the Psalms, uttered at the top of the voice, accompanied with dancing and shouting. This was done to force the attention of the god, and to be noticed by him at any cost.* In order to effect this, his worshippers made as much noise as possible, this being what was called a *teroua*. Some rudiments of sacred music may, perhaps, have already been in existence,† and at a later period David was credited with being much more of a *chorège* (among the Greeks, the *chorège* was the person who found money for plays) and a musical legislator than he in reality was. ‡

David seems, in fact, to have been fond of music, to have played upon instruments, and practised

* The religious dances of the negroes are based upon the same motive.

† Psalm lxviii. v. 26; Amos, ch. v. v. 23; ch. viii. v. 3 and 10.

‡ As a general rule, all the musical details given by the Chronicles appertain to the second Temple. In the verse referred to (Psalm lxviii. v. 25) there is an allusion to women playing timbrels; and the worship of the second Temple did not admit of women being musicians.

the art of dancing in the manner of the ancients.* He composed some poems. The elegy upon the death of Jonathan and that upon the death of Abner are probably by him. It is quite possible that, in the brief and confused poem in the Second Book of Samuel (ch. xxiii. v. 1–7), there are a few fragments written by the aged king.† David belonged to the old school with which the canticles of Jasar are identical. His style was not the commonplace and amplified strophe, with nothing circumstantial about it, which runs through most of the Psalms. Nevertheless, it was from a very early date the custom to attribute compositions of this kind to him.‡ Later on, in the comparatively modern epoch when the collection of the Psalms was made,§ his name was placed indiscriminately at the head of pieces belonging to the *sir* or *mizmor* order, which had no sort of connection with him.

Raised to the throne partly by the influence of the priests of Nob and the prophets of Ramah, David would, according to my line of argument, have been very much subject to what we should call clerical influences. Such was not by any means the case. Like Charlemagne, David was the king of the priests;

* Amos, ch. vi. v. 5; 1 Samuel, ch. xvi. v. 14 and following; 2 Samuel, ch. vi. v. 14 and following; ch. xxiii. v. 1.

† At the period when this piece was composed, David was already supposed to be the author of the Psalms (verse 1).

‡ 2 Samuel, ch. xxii., which again appears in the Book of Psalms (xviii.).

§ About two or three hundred years B.C.

but he was also their master. The worries which troubled the existence of the hapless Saul were spared him. Like the king of France, he held theocracy under a firm control, while starting from a thorough-paced theocratic principle.

Prophetism which, under Samuel, had attained such an important place, was relegated into the shade under David. A lay power had come into existence. No one inspired by Iahveh could claim rivalry with a favourite of Iahveh, such as David was. The prophets Gad and Nathan played, in regard to the king, quite a secondary part,* which, at a later date, the historians of the prophetic school endeavoured to magnify.† Gad, so oddly entitled the "seer of David,"‡ figures as an officer of the court. Neither Gad nor Nathan had any appreciable influence upon the course of affairs. It is not until after the degradation of the principle of royalty, a hundred years later, that the prophetical principle gains fresh force, and exercises a guiding and, at times, preponderating influence until, with the complete disappearance of the civil power, it becomes the essence and embodiment of the nation.

* Note especially in 1 Kings, ch. i. v. 22 and following, how very subordinate Nathan was.

† The episode of Nathan and Uriah (2 Samuel, ch. xi. v. 12) seems a complete invention.

‡ חזה דוד. 2 Samuel, ch. xxiv. v. 11.

CHAPTER VII.

OLD AGE OF DAVID.—WEAKENING OF HIS POWER.

The Semitic East never succeeded in founding a lasting dynasty,* if we take as a point of comparison our unique and wonderful royal houses of the Middle Ages, and notably the first of them all, the House of Capet, which was the incarnation of France for eight or nine hundred years. In the East, decay sets in very soon. The flourishing period of a dynasty rarely exceeds two or three reigns. The dynasty of Mehemet Ali, which the present century has seen come and go, gives us in this respect a measure which is rarely exceeded. It often happens, even, that the founder can discern on the horizon the dark clouds which threaten the destruction of his handiwork, and the end of great Asiatic conquerors is nearly always a melancholy one.

David was an apparent exception to this law of

* The Ottoman dynasty, which contrasts so strongly with Mussulman dynasties, owes its solidity not to Islamism, but to that reserve force of Tartar fidelity which nothing has as yet been able to shake.

Eastern instability. His descendants occupied the throne without any known solution of continuity. But it must be remembered that David's work was the fusion of Judah and of Israel, which lasted only two reigns; moreover, the accession of Solomon to the throne was, as we shall see, irregular. David himself, in his old age, had great difficulties to surmount at home. This may seem surprising at first sight, but there can be no doubt about it. The close of David's reign was marked by failings which the triumphant outset of the young king of Hebron's career had in no way presaged.

The cause of this weakness of Oriental dynasties is always the same, that is to say, the defective constitution of the family, polygamy. Polygamy, by weakening the bonds between father and son, and by introducing terrible rivalries into the palace, renders absolutely impossible the long line of successions from male to male and eldest son to eldest son which have founded the European nationalities. As David gradually became older, his harem became an intolerable hotbed of intrigue. Bath-sheba, who was capable of any ruse, had attained the rank of favourite wife. Henceforward, her settled resolve was that Solomon, her son, should be, at David's death, the sole heir to the monarchy of Israel.

This cluster of young and vigorous men, who were under the restraint of no moral law, formed, as it were, a stormy atmosphere in which dark tragedies were hatched and brought to a dénouement. Amnon,

David's eldest son, seemed destined for the throne, and consequently excited great jealousy. His nature was one entirely governed by the sexual instinct. He fell violently in love with Tamar, his half-sister, the daughter of a different mother; he feigned sickness that she might come and prepare his meat for him, and when she brought it to him in his chamber, "forced her and lay with her" (2 Samuel, ch. xiii. v. 14). He then hated her exceedingly and drove her out of the house. Tamar took refuge with her brother Absalom* and implored him to avenge her.

David showed himself weak and did not punish Amnon, because he loved him as his firstborn.† Absalom slew Amnon and then took refuge in the land of his grandfather on the maternal line, Talmai, son of Ammihud, king of Geshur, where he remained three years.‡ Absalom was one of the handsomest young men to be seen. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head his body was faultless. His hair, especially, was something wonderful. He cut it every year, for it became too heavy; when cut, it weighed 200 royal shekels. In temperament he was very passionate, unreasonable and violent.

* All the episode of Absalom's revolt (2 Samuel, ch. xiii. v. 20) strikes one by its unity and the skilful way in which it is narrated, reminding one of the Greek historians. The facts have evidently been arranged, but there is unquestionably a fund of historical truth about them.

† 2 Samuel, ch. xiii. v. 21, after the Greek.

‡ Ibid. The topographical difficulties relating to Geshur are almost insoluble.

During his voluntary exile at Geshur, he conceived the idea of doing for himself what his father had done, of getting himself declared king at Hebron like David, of drawing the latter from Jerusalem, and of governing with new advisers in the spirit of those who were discontented with the established order of things.

Such a scheme could not have been conceived even by so shallow a brain as that of Absalom, unless it had met with countenance in the disposition of certain sections of the people, and especially of certain members of the royal family. David, as he grew older, became weaker.* Like Augustus, he became humane and mild when it was no longer necessary for him to commit crime. The long reign of David excited, moreover, a good deal of smouldering impatience. The tribe of Judah, which had raised him to the throne, was offended by the favours which he bestowed upon the Benjaminites, who had formerly been the partisans of Saul. Strange though it may appear, Judah, which had been the mainspring of David's nascent power, was the soul of Absalom's revolt. There was general disaffection at Hebron and in the tribe. The expenditure of which Jerusalem was the object met with much opposition, and no doubt the foreign satellites of David excited the antipathy which generally attaches to troops of this description.

* There can be no doubt that the episode of Absalom's revolt took place towards the close of David's life.

The remnant of Saul's family was also a source of agitation. A certain Shimei, son of Gera, who dwelt at Bahurim, near Jerusalem, and Mephibosheth himself, though loaded with good things by David, were only watching for an opportunity. Relatives or allies of David, such as Amasa, son of Abigail, the sister of Zeruiah, who was consequently first cousin to Joab, and mischief-makers such as Ahithopel, of Gilo, were only anxious for some change. Absalom provided all these isolated malcontents with a rallying-point. Amasa was at daggers drawn with Joab. It was bruited abroad that his father Jetra was an Ismaelite,* who had not been legally married to Abigail. Ahithopel, very fond of giving advice and with a finger in every pie, was particularly dangerous.

Joab saw the danger, and endeavoured to bring about a reconciliation between father and son. The anger of the aged king was so great that he could not be approached outright on the subject, so Joab resorted to an indirect method. A woman of Tekoah, who had been duly prompted by Joab, demonstrated to David that a father, in punishing his son, punishes himself. Absalom was called back to Jerusalem, and after a long discussion a reconciliation was effected, thanks to the urgent entreaties of Joab. But a restless spirit cannot await the natural course of

* Ismaelite is the right expression. Compare the Arab name *Jetro*. If this personage had been an Israelite, he would have been called *Jitr*, *Jeter*.

events. Absalom wanted to make sure of succeeding to the throne, and he was impatient to reign as soon as possible. So he obtained a "chariot, horses, and fifty men that ran before him. And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate, and it was so that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment," Absalom spoke in depreciatory terms of the royal justice, and gave it to be understood that if he ruled, things would be very different. The prevailing belief that he would be David's successor won to his side all those who were anxious to have been among the first to salute the rising sun.

Resolved to hurry on a solution, Absalom feigned having made a vow to Iahveh, while he was at Geshur, which could only be performed in Hebron; and David allowed him to depart thither. These vows of royal personages, which entailed the slaughter of an enormous number of animals, were gigantic pleasure parties, to which the maker of the vow invited his friends. Two hundred men of Jerusalem went with Absalom to participate in his sacrifices and festivities. Absalom then declared himself openly a rebel, had himself proclaimed at Hebron, and announced, to the sound of the trumpet, that he would be king of Israel. Ahithopel of Gilo (a village close to Hebron) joined him, and the rising grew with giant strides. Between a sovereign near his end, and an heir presumptive whose accession appears certain, selfish human nature is not wont to hesitate.

Jerusalem soon ceased to be safe, and David left it and took refuge beyond Jordan.

The departure from the city was a mournful one. All the king's household followed him, with the exception of his concubines, who remained to keep the house. The *Kreti-Pleti* and the body of Gittite soldiers which had been attached to David's person remained faithful to him. David observed to Ittai the Gittite, their leader, that strangers were not so much bound to abide with him as his own subjects, advising him to remain with "the king" (Absalom). But the Philistine mercenaries were resolved to follow their master in his vicissitudes. The defile then began, David and his followers leaving by the north of the city. "All the country wept with a loud voice," as they passed over the brook Kidron, and commenced the ascent of Mount Olivet.* Then occurred, according to narratives which are, perhaps, only fanciful, a touching scene. Zadok, Abiathar, and the Levites, bearing the ark of the covenant, were seen approaching with the apparent intention of accompanying David. The Levites placed the ark upon the ground until all the people had passed. But David said to Zadok: "Carry back the ark of God into the city; if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again, and show me both it and His habitation. . . . Return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz,

* Very nearly the same road as the present one, leaving the city by St. Stephen's Gate, and passing by Gethsemane.

your son, and Jonathan, the son of Abiathar." Zadok and Abiathar did as the king commanded them, and carried back the ark to its tabernacle near the palace.

David, it is said, then went up to Mount Olivet, barefooted, and with his head covered, and all they who accompanied him wept. It was at this juncture that David learnt of Ahithopel's treason, and this was the greatest blow of all to him. Ahithopel had the reputation of being a wise man, who was consulted "as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God.* There he met Hushai, a prudent man, who had been preparing to follow him; but the king, who had not forgotten his accustomed policy of cunning, insisted upon his returning to the city in order to take part in the consultations of Absalom and of Ahithopel, and report it to him through the medium of Zadok and Abiathar.

The aged king then experienced every kind of ill-fortune, deceived by some and insulted by others. The sons of Saul had properties upon the slope of Mount Olivet, close to the route taken by the fugitives, and they gave free vent to the rancour which they had been dissimulating for thirty years. At Bahurim, Shimei heaped curses on the dethroned king, and threw stones at him. Abishai wanted to slay this insolent man; but David showed wonderful patience. The conduct of Mephibosheth was rather equivocal. After David and his followers had got a

* 2 Samuel, ch. xvi. v. 23.

little past the top of the hill, Ziba, the steward, who had borne with impatience the subordinate post assigned to him,* came and denounced his master, pointing out to David that Mephibosheth had not come out of Jerusalem with David, doubtless because he counted upon recovering the lost kingdom of his father. David was rather too ready to believe these insinuations, and conferred upon Ziba all his master's possessions.

Absalom entered Jerusalem just as David was wending his way over the summit of Mount Olivet. He was accompanied by Ahithopel, who was, so to speak, his minister and counsellor, and the first piece of advice he gave him was to go in unto his father's concubines, who had been left to keep the house. The taking possession of the harem of the conquered ruler was the proof that one had succeeded to his power. So a tent was spread for Absalom upon the top of the house, and he "went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel."† Ahithopel, in prompting him to this odious action, set up a mortal hatred between father and son, and closed the door to a reconciliation of which he would have paid the cost. His second piece of advice—and that was politic enough—was that David should be pursued without delay. Hushai was present at the council.‡ Zadok and Abiathar were informed

* See above, p. 3.

† Compare 2 Samuel, ch. xii. v. 7.

‡ 2 Samuel, ch. xvii. This narrative is somewhat contradictory.

by him of the decision which had been come to. Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel, and "a wench went and told them, and they went and told King David," and he crossed the Jordan with all his followers, and came to Mahanaïm.

Absalom had chosen as *sar-saba* his uncle Amasa, son of Abigail. He crossed the Jordan very soon after David, the theatre of the war thus being the land of Gilead. David, while at Mahanaïm, was treated with much attention and respect. Provisions, and even delicacies, were sent to him from Lo-debar, Rogelim, and Rabboth-Ammon. A certain Barzillai the Gileadite, more especially, a very aged man, and full of wisdom, was remarkably demonstrative in his attentions. The two young priests, Ahimaaz and Jonathan, came and went between the two camps, acting as spies, and bringing news.* The priests abstained from shedding blood, but they had other means of making themselves useful.

David recovered, in this difficult conjuncture, all his strategical skill. He divided his troops into thousands and hundreds, gave the command over one-third to Joab, over another third to Abishai, and over the remaining third to Ittai the Gittite. He wished to go forth with them to the battle, but they would not let him. He remained at the gate of the city, with the reserves, which were to be brought up in case of urgency. He enjoined them to do all they could to spare Absalom's life.

* 2 Samuel, ch. xviii. v. 19.

The combat took place in what was called "the wood of Ephraim," a vast wooded tract to the north-west of Mahanaïm. The victory of David's generals was complete: the wood was fatal to the fugitives; the rebels got entangled in the thickets, and were massacred. Absalom attempted to ride on his mule through a thicket of oaks; he got entangled in the branches; the mule that was under him made off, and he was slain. His body was cast into a pit, and a large heap of stones was piled over it. Another monument at the gate of Jerusalem, in the valley of Kidron, long bore the name of Absalom. Several years before his rebellion, as he had no issue, he determined to erect a pillar, to perpetuate his name, near the city in which he had lived,* and during his lifetime he built an *iad*, which was in existence long after his death.†

For the twentieth time David was sorely grieved at a death which was profitable to him; and the narratives of it were so arranged that he should not be responsible for it. The whole army defiled before the aged king, seated at the gate of Mahanaïm, and the kingdom of Israel was made secure: let me add the destiny of Israel, for, no doubt, if the reign of the founder of Jerusalem had come to such a sad end, David would not have been the legendary personage

* Isaiah, ch. lvi. v. 5.

† It is needless to say that this *iad* had nothing in common with the Asmonean or Herodean tomb in the valley of the Kidron, which is called "the tomb of Absalom."

he has become; and, upon the other hand, Iahveh would not have been the faithful god of his faithful people, the god of all others who should be served the best, because he is a sure god.

When Ahithopel and the rebels who were masters of Jerusalem learnt of David's victory, they disbanded. Ahithopel returned to Gilo, set his affairs in order, strangled himself, and was buried in the tomb of his fathers. The general body of the tribes, what was called Israel, did not remain in revolt. The tribe of Judah, which had been the most guilty, was the most difficult to win back. This was the work of the priests Zadok and Abiathar. Amasa was maintained in his military command. The politic David seemed for some time to reserve his favours for those who had been false to him; he was certain of the others. This gave rise to a good deal of discontent. The bulk of the tribe of Judah came to meet the royal army, when it crossed the Jordan at Gilgal. Shimei of Bahurim came with a thousand Benjaminites to ask for pardon, and it was granted. The case of Mephibosheth was very embarrassing. This unfortunate man came from Jerusalem to meet the king, affecting to have neither trimmed his beard nor washed his clothes since David's departure. Ziba, nevertheless, continued to accuse him. David hesitated, but eventually he divided the inheritance of Saul between Mephibosheth and Ziba. The former did not accept this solution, but we do not know what became of him, though in any case he does not appear

to have regained the favours which David had conferred upon him.

Barzillai the Gileadite had also come down from Rogelim and crossed Jordan with the king in order to accompany him to the other bank. It was he who had supplied David with provisions during his stay at Mahanaïm. And the king said to Barzillai: "Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem." But Barzillai replied: "How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem? I am this day fourscore years old, and can I discern between good and evil? Can thy servant taste what I eat and drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? . . . Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and mother. But behold thy servant Chimham,* let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good to thee." And the king answered that it should be so. And all the people went over Jordan. When the king had come over, he kissed Barzillai and blessed him. Then the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham with him.

Ephraim and the neighbouring tribes had not, as we have seen, taken part in the rebellion of Absalom. These tribes remained indifferent to a conflict which, in their eyes, was merely a domestic quarrel. But the eagerness of the men of Judah

* This was Barzillai's son.

to re-establish the king whom they had themselves deposed, gave them great offence. It was as if the Parisians, after having driven out Charles X. in July, 1830, had taken it on themselves to restore him without consulting the country. There were loud complaints that Judah arranged everything according to its own capricious fancy. "We have ten shares in the king," said the malcontents; "David belongs to us more than he does to you!" There was a long and angry argument. The fire kindled by Absalom was only partially put out.

A Benjaminite named Sheba, son of Bichri, seemed likely to open the whole question afresh. He blew a trumpet and said: "We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel!"

This was a call for the dissolution of the kingdom which had been so laboriously founded. The tribes, in fact, did withdraw from David, and several of them followed Sheba. The men of Judah alone clave unto David and escorted him back to Jerusalem. The harem which had been defiled by his son was repugnant to him, and he put the ten concubines whom he had left behind in a ward, and fed them, and they remained there as widows until the day of their death.

It then became necessary to reduce to submission Sheba, the son of Bichri. The chief difficulty of David was to get the troops which had remained

faithful to him and those which he had pardoned to act in concert. Joab and Amasa, in particular, were at open enmity. The aged king did not know what course to take. He charged Amasa to assemble within three days the men of Judah, but the attempt to mobilise them was badly executed.

David then ordered Joab to go out from Jerusalem with the *Kreti-Pleti* and the *gibborim* to reduce Sheba. Joab and Amasa met near the great stone which is in Gibeon. They affected the tenderest friendship for each other, and Joab advanced to kiss Amasa's beard, at the same time smiting him between the fifth rib with his sword, so that he shed out his bowels. Amasa fell bathed in his blood, in the middle of the road, and all the people stood still to look on. He was dragged into a field, a cloak was cast over him, and he died. Nearly all his followers joined Joab, and went in pursuit of Sheba.

The latter retreated to the extreme end of the land of Israel, and shut himself up in Abel of Beth-maachah, to the north of Lake Hulé.

Joab laid siege to this small fortress, and the inhabitants, foreseeing the misery which the rebels were about to bring upon them, cut off Sheba's head, and cast it to Joab over the walls. Then every man returned to his tent, and Joab came back to Jerusalem.

Amasa, who might have been such a thorn in David's side, had disappeared without David being

directly concerned in the murder, for which Joab was responsible. We shall now see how David made himself the executioner of divine justice upon Joab for a crime of which he had enjoyed the fruits.

CHAPTER VIII.

DEATH OF DAVID.

In the First Book of Kings* we read how Abishag, a Shunammite woman, was brought to the king, and served him in his old age. This humble maiden would not have had any place in history but for a circumstance which caused her to play a very tragic part. Her beauty inspired with a violent passion one of the sons of David, who found consolation in her for the loss of a kingdom, and staked his life for her. We shall see in due course how all this occurred.

The older the king grew, the more numerous were the intrigues which were got up around him. Since the deaths by violence of Amnon and Absalom, the question of the royal succession was a subject of general anxiety. David regarded Solomon as his successor; not that he was the eldest son, but the aged king saw in him many characteristics of his own nature, and, moreover, Bath-sheba, whose admission into the harem had been irregular, perhaps even criminal, exercised a great ascendency over her

* 1 Kings, ch. i. v. 1 and following.

husband. Solomon's attitude was fairly good. It was not so with Adonijah, the son of Haggith, the eldest born after Absalom, and a very handsome man as well, who affected all the ways of Absalom, save that he did not rebel. He was the young man who led the fashion in Jerusalem, where the great novelty of the day was a fine display of horses. Adonijah had a chariot, and horsemen, and footmen, who cleared the way before him, and he said incessantly, "I will be king." His father did not reproach him for this, as he should have done. Adonijah formed his plot with Joab and Abiathar. But Zadok, Benaiah, the prophet Nathan, and most of the *gibborim* were not with him.

Without waiting for the king's death, Adonijah resolved to proclaim himself, and, unbeknown to David, he had a grand festival prepared in the gardens which were to the south of Jerusalem, at the junction of the two valleys, by the stone of Zoheleth, and near the fountain called En-rogel.* The valley was filled with fat cattle, calves, and sheep, which had been slaughtered. Adonijah invited all his brethren, except Solomon, and the men of Judah, the king's servants; but he invited neither Benaiah, nor the *gibborim*, nor Nathan. People already were shouting: "Long live King Adonijah!"

Nathan came and told Bath-sheba, who at once entered the king's chamber, where he was alone with

* At the spot now called the Well of Nehemiah. See Clermont-Ganneau.

Abishag. Bath-sheba complained bitterly to David for allowing things to drift, and begged him to name his successor, Nathan urging the same request.

The aged king made up his mind, and he assembled together Zadok, Nathan, Benaiah, and the *Kreti-Pleti*, had Solomon set upon his own mule and brought down from Zion to Gihon—that is to say, to the spring which was at the east of the city, and the waters of which flowed into the Kidron.* It was there that the consecration took place. Nathan anointed Solomon king over Israel; the trumpets sounded, and all the people shouted: "God save King Solomon!" Then they returned to the palace of Zion, the people following to the sound of the fife. Upon re-entering the palace, Solomon seated himself upon the throne of David, who, stretched out upon his couch, made signs of assent. Solomon received the homage of the *Kreti-Pleti* and the officers of the palace amid signs of general rejoicing.

Adonijah and his guests were at this moment completing their feast a mile or so off. Joab, who was with them, heard the sound of the trumpet and trembled. At the same moment, Jonathan, son of the priest Abiathar, appeared upon the scene and informed the conspirators that the city was rejoicing over the proclamation of Solomon. The guests rose up in fear, and each one went his own way. Adonijah went up in haste to Zion, and seized the horns of the altar which was in front of the holy tabernacle. Solomon

* This is the spot now called the Virgin's Fountain.

induced him to let go of them by evasive promises, which in reality left him at liberty to take vengeance in the future.

We do not know how long David survived this partial abdication. His understanding with Solomon appears to have been complete. The characters of the two men were, at bottom, very much the same; it was the course of events which made all the difference between them. The brigand life which the father had led gave him a great advantage over his son, who had been brought up in the harem. David commended to his successor a few persons to whom he was indebted, especially the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, who were to have their places at the royal table. He showed the perfidious blackness of his hypocrite spirit as regarded Joab and Shimei. He had pardoned Shimei at a moment when generosity was, so to speak, compulsory upon him.* He did not dare to take back the pardon he had promised, because he had sealed it with an oath in the name of Iahveh; but before his death he asked Solomon to find a device for putting to death this man, who had so sorely offended him. "For thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood."† The commission which he gave Solomon touching Joab was still more odious. He owed everything to that energetic soldier, but he had

* See above, p. 60.

† 1 Kings, ch. ii. v. 9.

never liked him. In a number of instances he had seen him commit crimes which at bottom he did not regret, firstly, because he profited by them, and secondly, because he believed, in accordance with the prevalent belief, that these crimes would entail on Joab a violent death at the hands of the avenging elohim. David would never have dared to punish him, as he was too necessary for him; and, moreover, he was bound to him by too solemn vows. But he considered that these vows did not bind Solomon. So in the confidence of his final conversations with his son, he repeated what he had said about Shimei. Such a train of reasoning revolts us, and yet scruples of this kind implied the idea of just gods. Casuistry was the logical outcome of the idea of a precise and exacting power with which man has a running account for crimes at so much apiece. The debtor always endeavours to get over his creditor by subtle reasoning and excuses.

David died at the age of about seventy, after having reigned thirty years, in his palace of Zion. He was buried near there, at the bottom of a cave dug in the rock, at the foot of the hill on which stood the City of David.* This was about 1000 B.C. A thousand years B.C.! It is this point which must not be lost

* The tomb of David, and of the kings his successors, was towards the southern extremity of Ophel, a little way above the foot of Siloah (Nehemiah, ch. iii. v. 15). Excavations made at this spot would assuredly be not without results. See the passage quoted as being from Josephus by Theodoretus, *Quæst. in III. Reg.*, quæst. 6. Compare Clermont-Ganneau, *Revue Critique*, Nov. 7, 1887.

sight of when we endeavour to represent to ourselves a character so complex as that of David; when we endeavour to form an idea of the singularly faulty and violent world which has just been passing before our eyes. It may be said that true religion had not yet been born. The god Iahveh, who is each day acquiring such a preponderant importance in the Israelitish world, is revolting in his partiality. He makes his servants to prosper; this was a noted fact, and it was that which constituted his force. There is not a single instance of a servant of Iahveh being abandoned by him. Their profession of faith may be summed up in the sentence: "Iahveh hath redeemed my soul out of all distress;" * "Iahveh is my rock † and my fortress,"‡ from which he could defy his enemies, a buckler and a saviour. The servant of Iahveh is in all respects a privileged being. Oh! how expedient and wise it is to be a punctual and diligent servant of Iahveh.

It is in this sense especially that David's reign was of extreme importance from the religious point of view. David's was the first great fortune made in the name of and by the influence of Iahveh. The success of David, confirmed by the fact that his descendants succeeded him upon his throne, was the

* 1 Kings, ch. i. v. 29.

† Whence arises the custom of designating God by the name of *sour* (rock).

‡ 2 Samuel, ch. xxii. v. 2 and following. This Psalm (see Psalm xviii.) is not by David, but the tone of the first verse is very much in keeping with his style.

palpable demonstration of Iahveh's power. The successes of Iahveh's servants are the successes of Iahveh himself; and the powerful god is the one who succeeds. This was an idea differing very little from that of Islam, which had only one basis, viz., success. Islam is true, for God has given it the victory. Iahveh is the true god by experimental proof; he has given the victory to his faithful people. A brutal realism which gave no impulse to look beyond this triumph of the material fact. But what will happen when the servant of Iahveh becomes poor, proscribed, and persecuted for his fidelity to Iahveh? How momentous and strange the crisis of the Israelite conscience will then prove to be, we may henceforth begin to divine.

CHAPTER IX.

SOLOMON.

THE consequence of Oriental polygamy in the family circle is the preponderance of the mother, and, when we have to do with sovereigns, the marked importance of the Sultana Validé. As regards Solomon, this must have been especially the case. The preference which David showed for this son, who, according to certain narratives, must have reminded him of an odious crime, came in a great measure from the overmastering affection which he always felt for Bathsheba. An affection of this kind was due not only to the beauty of the woman, whom he is said to have obtained by an act of adultery, but to her superior intelligence. This gifted woman assumed, in fact, in the new kingdom a pre-eminent place. Her son was, by his wish, crowned with her hand.* When she entered, the king rose in her presence, and, with a deep bow, had a throne identical to his own placed at his right hand.† Married first, according to certain traditions, to a Hittite, who, perhaps, had very little

* Song of Solomon, ch. iii. v. 4. † 1 Kings, ch. ii. v. 19.

Israelite blood in his veins, Bath-sheba doubtless inspired her son with very little regard for the worship of Iahveh. Women, as a rule, during this period of history, showed themselves to be but lukewarm Iahveists. Iahveism was, like Islamism, almost exclusively a religion for men.*

Solomon began his reign, after the fashion of Eastern monarchs, by making away with those who might cause him the slightest umbrage. This is a practice, which, according to Eastern customs, does not convey any sort of reproach. Adonijah was not at all dangerous. He was consumed with love for Abishag, the young Shunammite, who had kindled the old age of his father. According to the ideas of the time, Abishag would belong to the successor of David.† This young girl did, in fact, pass with David's harem into the possession of Solomon. She was the pearl of the harem, and Adonijah, who had seen her tend his aged father, had reckoned upon her. He could console himself for the loss of the kingdom, but not for that of Abishag. One day he came to see Bath-sheba, whom he took to be a woman capable of understanding him, and said to her: "Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit, the kingdom is turned about, and has become my brother's, for it was his from the Lord. And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not. . . . Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king (for he will not

* See above, p. 42. † See above, p. 61.

say thee nay), that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife." Bath-sheba promised to speak to Solomon, who was very angry, and replied: "Ask for him the kingdom also; for he is my elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab, the son of Zeruiah." Then, getting more angry still, he swore by Iahveh that same day that Adonijah should he put to death, and Solomon sent forthwith Benaiah, the chief of the *Kreti-Pleti*, to kill him. It may be that he loved Abishag, or it may be that he was only on the look out for an excuse to be rid of a rival.

Abiathar, who had belonged to the party of Adonijah, was hateful in Solomon's sight. He did not dare, however, to have him put to death, on account of his being a priest, because he had borne "the ephod of the Lord God before my father,* and had been the companion of all his evil fortunes." He drove him out of Jerusalem, deprived him of the priesthood, and exiled him to Anathoth, to the north of Jerusalem, where he had an inheritance. Thus the official priesthood, if we may so say, appertained exclusively to Zadok.

Joab, hearing of the fate of Adonijah and of Abiathar, saw what was in store for him. Solomon, in order to put him to death, would have needed no suggestion to that effect from his dying father, the

* 1 Kings, ch. ii. v. 26. The text is "ark." The confusion of ארון and אפוד occurs again in 1 Samuel, ch. xiv. v. 18, and is easily explained from a paleographical standpoint.

part which he had taken in Adonijah's baffled attempt would have sufficed to compass his ruin. Joab took refuge in the sacred tabernacle, and laid hold upon the horns of the altar. Solomon sent Benaiah to kill him, but the latter hesitated; to violate the hospitality of Iahveh seemed a horrible crime. Solomon ordered him to disregard this, using the quibbling argument that in killing Joab no murder was committed, but that it was Iahveh who was avenging upon Joab the blood of Abner and of Amasa, "two men better than himself, whom he had slain," without David's knowledge. Thus his death would relieve the house of David of the blood which weighed upon it. Benaiah, with his mind set at rest by this view of the matter, slew Joab. The aged warrior was buried in his own land, near Bethlehem, and Benaiah succeeded him as chief of the host.

As to Shimei, Solomon had him placed in confinement at Jerusalem, and promised him that his life should be spared. Then he found a way of proving to himself that it would be a good deed to kill him, that Iahveh ordered it, that the house of David would derive all kinds of blessings from it, and that by doing such good deeds, his throne would be consolidated for ever. Benaiah was again entrusted with the execution of this decision; and so disappeared the last survivor of the race of Saul. A dreadful mixture of reasons of state and fanaticism was the pretext of these atrocities.

Solomon, thoroughly established upon the throne,

organised his government. The lists of his functionaries which we possess show that he retained the services of a great many of David's ministers, or that he conferred the succession to the same offices on their sons. Benaiah, as we have seen, was his lord of the host; Adoniram was over the tribute; Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, was the *mazkir* * (recorder); Elihoreph and Ahiah, sons of Zeruiah, David's *sofer*, had the title of *sofer* (scribe) in their turn. Ahishar was over the household; Zadok, or rather, it would appear, his son Azariah, was *cohen*;† Zabud, the son of Nathan, was principal officer and the king's friend; Eliab, the son of Saphat, was the chief of the guards;‡ Azariah, the son of Nathan, was chief of the *nissabim* or prefects. The *nissabim* were, in the main, fiscal agents, charged with the duty of making all Israel contribute its share to the heavy cost of the royal house. For this purpose, the land was divided into twelve departments, which did not tally at all closely with the divisions of the ancient tribes. The list of these departments, and of their prefects, towards the close of Solomon's reign, has come down to us, and is to be found in the First Book of Kings, ch. vii., v. 7–19.

Judah is not included in the enumeration, doubtless

* There is probably some mistake here. The compiler appears to have exaggerated the number of David's officers who were employed under Solomon.

† The text says "Zadok and Abiathar," which is inconsistent with the preceding passage.

‡ See Thenius, *Die Bücher der Kœnige*, pp. 30, 31.

because it was a privileged land, with hegemony over the other tribes. Each of these departments provided for the expenses of a month. The king's table, open to all, consumed daily thirty measures of fine flour, threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, twenty oxen out of the pastures, a hundred sheep, besides the game and poultry. The *nissabim* also had to provide barley and straw for the different cavalry stations.*

In addition to these contributions in kind, there were direct tributes, custom dues upon the merchantmen and the caravan traffic, to say nothing of the tributes paid by the vassal kings. We possess only very obscure information upon all these points,† hyperboles which tell of the ignorance of the shallow chroniclers, to whom these administrative affairs are strange, and who see them with the magnifying eyes of surprise.

We must, indeed, at this point make a reservation of no little importance. We do not possess for the history of Solomon, as we do for that of David, any original documents. One part of the narrative is marked by an unfriendly feeling which discloses the intention of presenting Solomon at times as a crafty tyrant, at others as a greedy and prodigal king, putting great pressure upon his people for the maintenance of a monstrous harem and a Gargantuan

* 1 Kings, ch. iv. v. 7 and following; ch. v. v. 7.

† Ibid. ch. x. v. 14, 15—a modern passage; the word פחות is Assyrian.

table. If the history, as it is told in the First Book of Kings, were true, the government of Solomon would have been one of the hardest and most tyrannical which ever existed. People who have no experience of State affairs—and the historian in question is clearly simple-minded to a degree—understand nothing about taxation and finance, or about the burdens of a State. The best justified expenditure seems to them a mere caprice of the sovereign. The taxpayer of small intelligence (and how many such are there ?) believes that the money which he pays to the sovereign is spent, as he would spend it, in feasting and pleasures. This historian of Solomon describes with much prolixity, puerile prodigalities; side by side with them he just casually alludes to the expenditure upon such serious objects as rebuilding towns, docks, arsenals, forts, breeding studs, and the organisation of certain branches of commerce.

We who know what occurred in connection with the reign of Louis XIV., can see very well that these brilliant developments of monarchical power are twofold in their aspect. Advantageous for a part of the nation, they weigh heavily upon the other part. Some suffer, others profit by them. Hence it is that there are always two currents of historical judgments upon these great facts. Solomon was evidently detested by some, admired by others. The opinion of the taxpayers finds expression in the resentment of the prophets and of the sacred historians, who betray a spirit of marked opposition to the profane king

whom they delineate as hard upon the people. It was cruel for the proud Israelites belonging to the northern tribes, who had never been subject to any dominion, to be thus treated as fit subjects for taxation of the most exacting kind. It was all the more galling because the city of Jerusalem and the tribe of Judah alone benefited by these burdens imposed upon the nation. The State, when it intervenes in social affairs, always costs very dear and has a very irritating effect. The populations which were decimated or half starved for the pleasures and grandeur of Louis XIV., could not see that their suffering had any other cause than unmeasured selfishness. Israel could have consoled itself all the less because the work of Solomon was in antipathy to its genius and because it was ephemeral. These great things require to be judged by the reverse of the medal; and in this case the reverse was a melancholy one. If, upon the morrow of Louis XIV.'s death, France had been broken up, the judgment of history upon the Grand Monarque would have been very different from what it is.

The opinion hostile to Solomon was, therefore, in many respects justified. All the literature of the northern kingdom was impregnated with it; even in Judah the Iahveists of the old school were hostile to him. And yet these well-founded recriminations have failed to stifle the concert of favourable voices, which date from this reign an enormous increase in the population, in the public wealth and in the

general welfare of the people.* Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree,† and at Jerusalem money was circulated with an abundance hitherto unknown.‡

It was the Canaanite populations, still distinct from the Israelites, who suffered the most from this régime of forced labour and fiscal dues. David had with good reason set himself to the task of assimilating these old relics of the native population. Solomon was driven, by the exigencies of his exchequer, into just the opposite policy. In order to lighten the burdens of the Israelites, he made serfs of the remnants of the ancient Hittites and Canaanites. These unfortunate populations found themselves made liable to a periodical levy for public works § The Gibeonites, in particular, were made serfs of the temple.‖ The army which, under David, included Hittite officers,¶ was henceforth composed solely of Israelites.** The Canaanite population disappear out of history. When orthodoxy was established, Israel no longer admitted any uncircumcised slaves within its borders; every one received in his flesh a mark of the son of Abraham. The inferior race was thus borne away in the current of the stronger race. It played in

* 1 Kings, ch. iv. v. 20. † Ibid. v. 25. ‡ Ibid. ch. x. v. 27.

§ Ibid. ch. ix. v. 15, 20, and following. At ch. v. v. 27, the distinction of race is not made.

‖ Joshua, ch. ix. Compare Ezra, ch. ii. v. 55, 58; Nehemiah, ch. vii. v. 57, 60.

¶ See above, p. 9.

** 1 Kings, ch. ix. v. 22.

the history of Israel the part of a resisting democracy, and had a latent action in all its convulsions.

The legend records that Solomon, in a dream at Gibeon, having the choice of the rarest gifts, asked Iahveh to give him *hokma*, a word which is generally translated by "wisdom."*

There must be no confusion on this head. The *hokma* referred to here is political ability, the art of governing, as understood in the East. It is because Solomon is a *hokam* that he is able to find a pretext for slaying Joab, and evading the oath made to Shimei. A species of political duplicity was in those days regarded as the height of intelligence. Solomon had no need, in order to acquire this gift, of an alleged divine favour. The instructions which his father gave him at his death were quite the ideal of what Iahveh was supposed to have revealed to him. Here, again, as I hold, a distinction is necessary between the real character of Solomon and the way in which history interprets it. Reduced to general maxims and commentated upon by the way in which Solomon acts upon them, these instructions of David are the code of the most formidable theocratic absolutism imaginable. The way in which the murders of Adonijah, Joab and Shimei are explained, infers that whatever succeeds is right. The cause which Iahveh loves is the just cause; by loving it, he makes it just. Abstract right does not exist; there are no victims in the world; the man who is killed has himself killed.

* 1 Kings, ch. iii. v. 5 and following.

Shimei, who has made an error in choosing sides, and who has done wrong to the elect of Iahveh, is guilty. The *hattâ*, "the offender,"* is the man who has fallen into disgrace; he whom the course of events has put in the wrong,† he "who stinks in the nostrils of Iahveh." All this was the outcome of this principle that crime is of necessity punished in this world. When such a belief as this is held, it must be supposed that one is serving God by bringing the criminal to his doom. Any royal act of severity is, therefore, the execution of a divine will, and merits a recompense from God.‡

The government which strikes the blow is the agent of Iahveh.§ If it does not chastise, it fails in its duty. By punishing, it secures itself from punishment. Joab has committed crimes; David has benefited by them, and, for this reason, must not slay him. But the son of David kills Joab, so that the house of David might be absolved for ever.‖ The

* Carefully consider the meaning of חטא, especially Ecclesiastes, ch. ii. v. 26.

† 1 Kings, ch. i. v. 21.

‡ In very primitive countries like Brittany, where there is a readiness to believe that certain crimes, such as perjury, are punished in this world, there is a feeling that it is doing honour to an avenging Providence (represented in Brittany by St. Yves) to slay the guilty, when you have the intimate conviction, not capable of demonstration to others, of the perjury having been committed (Crime of Hengoat).

§ Compare the doctrine of St. Paul, Romans, ch xiii. v. 1 and following.

‖ 1 Kings, ch. ii. v. 31.

king is the justiciary of God. The direction which he gives to the sword is the very impression of the will of Iahveh. At an earlier epoch Iahveh slew with his own hand; now he slays by means of the king. We see that the darkest political nightmares have haunted the human brain long before the time of Philip II.

It is difficult to believe that Solomon, whose defect does not appear to have been fanaticism, can have had ideas of this kind, imbued with sombre Iahveism. They were ascribed to him because they were the dominant ideas of the time. Justice in the world was the abyss in which the Israelitish conscience was lost. Not having the alternative which Christianity has of "remitting the guilty man to his natural judge," the Israelite thinker was reduced to interpreting at his fancy the often obscure injunctions of Iahveh. Let it be said, to the honour of the Hebrew people, they never went so far as the absurdity of the ordeal; the *urim* and *thummim*, which covered so many impostures, does not appear to have been the cause of any innocent man's death.* The *hokma* of Solomon may have often implied much that is arbitrary; but it does not seem ever to have left anything to chance.

Something, at all events, emerged amidst this

* The case of Jonathan is not a case of ordinary justice; it is not, in fact, much more than a pungent anecdote. The expression לפני יהוה does not always imply drawing lots. The judgments of Iahveh were analogous to the Greek oracles, not to ordalies.

chaos of sophistry. Many an idea which may now appear to us very backward may at one time have shown an advance upon the past. The old Semitic tongues implied a feeling of justice which was imperfectly analysed, a principle of coarse but vigorous morality. Crime was considered an enormity against nature, which, as a matter of course, entailed its penalty.* Gradually men learnt to make allowance for intuitive divinations. The art of rendering justice, of discerning promptly and surely the true culprit, was regarded as a divine gift, as a part of the wisdom which comes from God. According to the legend Solomon excelled in this respect,† and it may have been so. Very selfish governments like to show themselves just when their interests are not at stake; the intelligence which serves to bring about the triumph of a political calculus may also serve to find the knot of some other complicated cause.

* See vol. i. p. 112. † 1 Kings, ch. iii. v. 16–28.

CHAPTER X.

PROFANE DEVELOPMENT OF ISRAEL.

THE main characteristic of Solomon's reign was peace The Philistines, allies of the new dynasty, and given profitable employment by it as mercenaries, were no longer tempted to cross the frontier. The army preserved the same organisation as in the time of David, but growing weaker of course, as happens with all military organisations. Neither Judah nor any of the other tribes saw, for a period of forty years, the face of a single enemy.

The decay of military strength was only felt in the zone of countries which were tributary to the kingdom. Hadad, or Hadar, the Edomite, who had been defeated by Joab and had taken refuge in Egypt, having heard of David's death, and that of Joab* as well, left Pharaoh, whose sister-in-law he had married.† We have no details of this war, as

* See above, p. 26.

† 1 Kings, ch. xi. v. 14–22. Verse 14 represents what follows as a punishment. The second half of v. 15 is transposed. This should assuredly read זאת and אדם. The confusion of *Aram* and *Edom* occurs frequently. See above, p. 29, note *.

they have been purposely suppressed by the Hebrew historiographers, doubtless because they did not turn to the honour of their nation. We only know that Hadad braved Israel throughout the whole of Solomon's reign, that he did it all the injury he could, and that he was an independent ruler over a great part at all events of Edom.

A still more formidable adversary was Rezon, son of Eliadah, an Aramean warrior who, after the defeat of his lord, Hadadezer, king of Zobah, had assembled about him those who had fled before the sword of David. It is possible that, previous to the death of David, he had succeeded in holding the field with these troops well inured to warfare. A lucky *coup-de-main* placed the city of Damascus at their mercy, and they succeeded in maintaining themselves there. During the whole of Solomon's reign Rezon continued to make war against Israel. The kingdom of Zobah does not appear, however, to have been re-established. Damascus became henceforth the centre and capital of that part of Aramea which adjoined Mount Hermon.

David's horizon never extended beyond Syria. With Solomon, fresh perspectives opened up for the Israelites, especially for Jerusalem. Israel is no longer a group of tribes, continuing to lead in its mountains the patriarchal life of the past. It is a well-organised kingdom, small according to our ideas, but rather large judged by the standard of the day. The worldly life of the people of Iahveh is about to

begin. If Israel had no other life but that it would not have found a place in history. In the materialist sense, happy the people which has no history. In the idealist sense, happy the people which has its place in the annals of intelligence ! A people becomes glorious by its revolutionists, by those who bring about its ruin, by those whom it has treated with contumely, killed and outraged.

An alliance with Egypt was the first step in that career of profane politics which the prophets afterwards interlarded with so much that was impossible. The kings of Tanis were at this moment raising in Syria the prestige of Egypt, which had been so lowered. As the outcome of an expedition, the circumstances of which are unknown to us, the king of Tanis, Psioukhanou II.,* being in agreement, no doubt, with the Philistines, had conquered the ancient territory of Dan, and more especially the Canaanite town of Gezer. He exterminated the population, and burnt the city. It was Israel who benefited by this conquest. The king of Egypt gave Gezer as a dowry to his daughter, and married her to Solomon. Gezer was thus adjoined to the Israelite domain, and became immediately dependent upon the king of Jerusalem.†

The daughter of the king of Tanis came to reside at Zion. Solomon had not yet commenced his important building operations. The Egyptian princess at first resided in David's palace, which must have

* Maspero, *Hist. Anc.* pp. 333, 336. † 1 Kings, ch. ix. v. 16.

appeared poor to her after the wonderful palaces she had just left. It is not too much to suppose that the tastes of this princess for refined luxury had a great influence upon the mind of her husband; the more so as she always occupied in the palace a position superior to the other women of the harem.

The relations of Solomon with Tyre exercised a still more civilising influence. Tyre, recently separated from Sidon, was then at the zenith of its activity, and, so to speak, in the full fire of its first foundation. A dynasty of kings named Hiram, or rather Ahiram, was at the head of this movement. The island was covered with constructions imitated from Egypt. What was especially admired was the great central temple of Melkarth, which was to be the umbilicus of the Tyrian world, as its twin brother at Jerusalem was the centre of attraction of the Jewish world.* Already in David's time, as we have seen, relations were established between the two peoples. Under Solomon, these relations became much closer and unintermittent. Hiram is the close ally of the king of Israel; it is he who provides Solomon with the artists who were lacking at Jerusalem; the precious materials for the buildings in Zion; seamen for the fleet of Ezion-geber.

The region of the upper Jordan, conquered by David, appears to have remained tributary to Solomon. What has been related as to a much larger extension of the kingdom of Solomon is greatly exag-

* *Mission de Phénicie*, p. 527 and following.

gerated.* Neither Northern Syria, nor the region of Lower Orontes and of Aleppo, nor even Hamath, were ever vassals of Solomon. The words "unto the Euphrates, unto Egypt . . . from one sea to the other," are, as used by the Hebrew writers, a complacent form of geography which must not be taken to the letter.† The fables as to the pretended foundation of Palmyra by Solomon come from a letter intentionally added to the text of the ancient historiographer by the compiler of the Chronicles.‡ The construction of Baalbec by Solomon rests upon a still more inadmissible piece of identification.§ These hyperboles were forced into Jewish historiography by the prophets in the time of Jeroboam II., whose dream it was that Israel should possess natural frontiers, which were supposed to have been realised under David and Solomon.|| These were, so to speak, catch phrases which were exhumed on different occasions without any regard to their conformity with the truth. In reality, the dominion of Solomon was confined to Palestine. The list of the *nissabim*,

* 1 Kings, ch. iv. v. 20; ch. v. v. 4; ch. viii. v. 65; 2 Kings, ch. xiv. v. 25, 28. It need hardly be pointed out that the Books of the Chronicles are here of little authority.

† Compare Psalm lxii. v. 9 and following.

‡ Compare 1 Kings, ch. ix. v. 18, and 2 Chronicles, ch. viii. v. 4. The Kelib is the true sense. Tamar, near Petra, is meant, not Tadmor.

§ Baalath = Baalbec.

|| Amos, ch. vi. v. 14; ch. viii. v. 12; 2 Kings, ch. xiv. v. 23–28 (Thenius, p. 347). Compare Ezekiel, ch. xlvii. v. 16; ch. xlviii. v. 1; Numbers, ch. xxxiv. v. 8; Joshua, ch. xiii. v. 5.

given above, does not extend beyond Israel. Edom and Aram had completely emancipated themselves from the yoke which David had imposed upon them; Moab and Ammon were in the position of countries subdued but not annexed. The list of the *nissabim* referred to above would appear to make it doubtful whether the provinces paid a real tribute. The tribes of Israel alone are given in this list as contributing towards the expenses of the royal establishment.

What was better than peoples kept under by force, the Arab brigands were held in check from pillage. The Amalekites, the Midianites, the Beni-Quedem and other nomads were confronted with an impassable barrier all around Israel. The Philistines preserved their independence. The Phœnician cities of Jaffa, Acre, Tyre, Sidon, Gebel, and Hamath, treated Solomon as a powerful neighbour, but were in no way under servitude to him. They formed a small state about 120 miles long by sixty miles broad, with a zone of tributaries and allies. When it is surmised that Solomon reigned over all Syria, the size of his kingdom is exaggerated at least fourfold. Solomon's kingdom was barely a fourth of what is now called Syria.

The legendary historiographer attributed to Solomon only petty buildings, quite disproportionate with the resources of the nation. Other constructions, referred to with less detail, were useful or necessary. The city of Gezer was in ruins, as a result of the Egyptian expedition, and Solomon rebuilt it. The two

Bethorons, which had perhaps suffered from the same expedition, were rebuilt. It was the same with the Danite town of Baalath,* Hasor, and Megiddo, in the north. Solomon, moreover, built "cities of store," or warehouses, the commercial or military object of which cannot well be defined.† There was, more especially, a place named Tamar, in the direction of Petra,‡ of which Solomon made a city, and which became a calling-place for the caravans. These commercial ports were in keeping with one of the chief preoccupations of the age—preoccupations analogous to those which, in our day, have caused so much importance to be attached to the piercing of the Isthmus of Suez. With very good reason, too, Solomon had his attention constantly fixed upon the Red Sea, a broad canal which placed the dawning civilisation of the Mediterranean in communication with India, and thus opened up a new world, that of Ophir.§ The Bay of Suez belonged to Egypt, but

* A very common name; site doubtful.

† 1 Kings, ch. ix. v. 19.

‡ Ibid. v. 18. See above, p. 92, note ‡.

§ M. Lassen's theory, identifying Ophir with the India at the mouths of the Indus, far from having been shaken, has become something like a certainty. If Ophir is often connected with the Yemen and the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, this is due to an illusion which must be very carefully taken into account in questions of ancient geography. The maps made after the narratives told by seamen are essentially defective, as the sailor counts only by calling-places, and measures distances according to the difficulty he has had in getting from point to point. The phenomenon of the monsoon, for instance, entirely misleads the mariner. He has slept a good deal in the interval, and he thus sets down as adjacent

the Gulf of Akaba was, one may say, at the mercy of any one who cared to take it. Elath and Asiongaber,* according to all appearances, had been of very little importance in earlier times. Without regularly occupying the country, Solomon secured the route by the Valley of Araba. He built a fleet at Asiongaber, though the Israelites had never much liking for the sea.† Hiram provided Solomon with sailors, or, what is more probable, the two fleets acted together.‡ On leaving the Straits of Aden, they went to Ophir, that is to say, to Western India, to Guzarate, or to the coast of Malabar.

ports places which are five or six hundred leagues apart. In the first century of our era, the Yemen is currently called *India* (see Marcus Aurelius, pp. 462, 463). In a manifesto of the late Mahdi (*Journal des Débats*, Feb. 14, 1884), Suez and Constantinople are spoken of as if they were two towns quite close together, because an African from Nubia embarks at Suez for Constantinople. Abyssinia and India were in the same way formerly associated, and in our day certain quarters of Suez have the aspect of being a continuation of Madras or Calcutta. The heads of the great navigations are united by a sort of electric wire, which creates, at its two extremities, similar polarisations.

* Towns close to each other. See the Duc de Luynes' map, Paris, 1866.

† Psalm cvii. v. 23, and following.

‡ 1 Kings, ch. ix. v. 28; ch. x. v. 11, 22, the fleet is called "the navy of Hiram." Ophir (India) and Tharsish (Spain) being the two extremes of the trade of Tyre, they were sometimes confused, and the Red Sea fleet was called by extension "the navy of Tharsish" (1 Kings, ch. x. v. 22); just as in our day Transatlantic or Peninsular has become synonymous for ocean-going vessels. This abuse of terms in the ancient texts has led the author of the Chronicles into a strange error (2 Chronicles, ch. ix. v. 21; ch. xx. v. 36, 37).

The navy put to sea once every three years at the time of the monsoon. We know how easy navigation is at this season of the year; there is nothing to do but put up the sail and let the wind drive the ship; so that one reaches, while asleep, the port which it is desired to make.* If the expeditions had returned direct from Bombay or Goa to Asiongaber, they would not have extended over many months. The fact that they lasted three years, proves that the fleet went all round the coast of India, perhaps that of Indo-China as well. But whatever the ships brought back from these distant lands was naturally supposed to come from Ophir.

What then were the articles which the Tyrian and Israelite navigators brought back from Ophir? Nothing of much consequence, but a great many trifling objects. From Ophir, they derived large quantities of gold, silver, precious stones, sandal wood (*Algum* in Hebrew, *Valgum* in Sanscrit), ivory (*sen habbim* in Hebrew, *ibha*, elephant, in Sanscrit), monkeys (*kopim* in Hebrew, *kapi* in Sanscrit), and peacocks (*toukiim* in Hebrew, *togeï* in Tamoul). These imports made a great impression upon the people of Syria. The sandal wood especially, with its bright red colour and its perfume, created an extraordinary impression. Balustrades were made of it for the Temple and the royal palace, cinnours and nebels for the musicians. After that time, no more sandal wood was seen at Jerusalem.†

* See *Sefer-Nameh*, Schaefer edition, pp. 123, 124.

† 1 Kings, ch. x. v. 12.

What did the Semite merchants leave at Ophir in exchange for these precious metals and for those other products the intrinsic value of which was not very great? We do not know. The parts of India visited by the flotilla could not, at this epoch, have been more organised than America was upon the arrival of the Spaniards. The gold and other products might have been taken by force from the natives. This is all the more probable because these expeditions do not appear to have been repeated very often.

At the same time that Solomon formed a navy for himself, he also formed a body of cavalry and a set of war chariots.* He also had a great number of riding horses† and chariots for his personal use.‡ With regard to the war chariots, he had only to imitate the Canaanites of the plains and the Philistines. The riding horses and the chariots were got from Egypt.§ The Arab horse, as it would seem, or at all events riding as practised by the Arabs, did not yet exist. Then, as in our day, the central parts of Arabia kept a jealous watch over their horses. The animals in use among the Arab tribes bordering upon Palestine, the Ishmaelites, the Amalekites and the Beni-Quedem, were the ass and the camel.

* 1 Kings, ch. v. v. 6; ch. ix. v. 19; ch. x. v. 26.

† Ibid.; ch. x. v. 26. Compare 2 Chronicles, ch. i. v. 14; ch. ix. v. 25. The figures in these ancient texts are also open to doubt.

‡ Song of Solomon, ch. i. v. 9.

§ See above, p. 6. Compare Genesis, ch. xlv. v. 27; ch. xlvi. v. 5 and 29; ch. l., v. 9.

A great part of the Israelite cavalry remained with the king at Jerusalem. Solomon established, nevertheless, at various places, cavalry posts or quarters, *Aré-ha-rékeb, Aré-hap-parasim.* We find a mention, in the south of Palestine, of Beth-marcaboth, or place where the chariots were kept, and of Hazar-susim (a kind of breeding-stud).* There was a service of dealers who went to buy horses in Egypt, and brought them into Judæa.† A horse thus brought into Judæa cost 150 shekels (nearly £20), and a chariot and horses cost nearly four times as much. These merchants, who no doubt paid a tribute to the king, also supplied horses to the Kheta ‡ and Aramean kings.

These new ways naturally excited great antipathy among those who clung to the ancient agricultural or nomad tendency, and were opposed to luxury and the development of wealth. These backward and benighted persons were especially indignant at the introduction of cavalry and chariots, which offended their patriarchal habits, and seemed to them an insult to Iahveh. We must, I admit, be careful not to attribute to these early ages the overweening pietism of the eighth and of the ninth century. No one yet ventured to assert that the true servant of Iahveh has no need of these external aids, which inspire man

* 1 Chronicles, ch. iv. v. 31.

† 1 Kings, ch. x. v. 28, 29.

‡ Abusive term (compare 2 Kings, ch. vii. v. 6), the survival of a previous usage.

with an exaggerated confidence in his own strength, and prevent him from ascribing all glory to God.* But the germ of these sentiments already had come into existence. The prophets were silent, but they had begun to murmur. The progress made in the profane order of things seemed to them profoundly degrading in the moral order. Solomon had no consideration for these fanatics, and kept them at arm's length; but fanatics have the patience to wait.

What gave force to the adversaries of royalty was that there was a great relaxation of morality. The king was very partial to women,† his harem being immense, for we read of seven hundred wives, called *saroth* (princesses), and three hundred concubines, slaves who had been bought and were servants of the *saroth*. The most moderate calculations gave him sixty queens and eighty concubines, exclusive of the *alamoth*. Solomon was particularly fond of strange women. In addition to the daughter of the king of Tanis, he loved Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women. Now, although the severe rules which were afterwards made with regard to mixed marriages did not then exist, the Israelites looked upon them with an unfavourable eye. The zealous worshippers of Iahveh asserted that the strange women, clinging to their form of religion in the bosom of the Israelite family, were endless causes

* Psalm xx. v. 8 and following.

† 1 Kings, ch. xi. v. 1 and following; Song of Solomon, ch. vi. v. 8, 9.

of perversion to their husband; and it was remarked with disgust that it was of these women that Solomon was fondest. In his old age, as we shall see, they gained a great ascendency over him, and led him to forget in a great measure the worship of Iahveh.

CHAPTER XI.

BUILDINGS AT JERUSALEM.

THE edifices of Jerusalem were the most admired part of Solomon's work, that which struck the most both his contemporaries and posterity. David's constructions were of very little importance; but thanks to the wealth and the activity of his successor, Jerusalem was enabled to rival the most brilliant of the Egyptian and the Phœnician cities. There was nothing very original to characterise this dawn of art. Egypt supplied the models, Tyre the hewers of stone, the architects, the decorators, and the bronze founders. But the epoch was good. A style, severe in its *ensemble*, elegant in its details, had been formed in Phœnicia, under the influence of Egyptian art. The main features of it were smooth walls very carefully built. Facings of carved and gilded wood, innumerable chargings of bronze, a vigorous polychromy, and rich hangings lent to these buildings an infinity of grace and of life.*

The soil on which Jerusalem stood furnished

* *Mission de Phénicie*, conclusion.

excellent stone, the *maleki*, a hard style of chalk, still so much appreciated in the present day.* But the timber for building which Judæa produced was of an inferior kind. A treaty of commerce was concluded between Hiram and Solomon. Specie was rare, and direct exchange was still the prevailing custom. It was agreed that Solomon should supply Hiram with provisions, such as corn and oil for his household, and that in return Hiram should supply Solomon with all the cedar and pine wood he might require. Lebanon was covered at that time with those trees of which it has, owing to the requirements of a more dense population, been stripped within the last few centuries.† The Sidonians‡ were adepts in cutting down the trees, bringing them to the water's edge, and making them up into rafts, which were then sent to their destination, whatever it might be. The work was done for Jerusalem on a large scale. Solomon paid the wages of the Phœnician workmen, and sent to help them squads of Israelites, who were taught to do this kind of work. The rafts were taken to a point on the coast close to Jerusalem—to Jaffa, for instance. There the Phœnicians undid the raft, and Solomon's men had the trunks of the trees brought away.

* Great caverns beneath Jerusalem. De Vogüé, *Le Temple de Jérusalem*, p. 4 and following.

† *Mission de Phénicie*, p. 219 and following.

‡ *Sidonim* was still the general name employed to designate the Phœnicians.

All this constituted a very heavy burden for Israel, a burden of which the legendary Adoniram has borne the responsibility in history. In reality, the bulk of the labour rested principally upon the Canaanite populations. The squads were organised in such a way that the men might spend alternately a month in Lebanon and two months at home. The moving of the timber was effected by hand,* and superintendents armed with cudgels stimulated the nervous force of the unhappy men set to do this work.†

In the meanwhile, the hewers of stone were perforating the ground beneath Jerusalem and its outskirts.‡ The stone of Judæa, like that of Syria generally, admits of blocks several yards square being extracted.§ These enormous blocks were used for the substructure and foundation of edifices, and most of them were got from the quarries which are still to be seen under Jerusalem, but which were then outside the city. The Phœnicians cut the stone with surprising art.|| The men of Gebel, more especially, had a reputation for the hewing of blocks of this kind,

* Enormous number of נשאי סבל. 1 Kings, ch. v. v. 29.

† Compare the Assyrian bas-reliefs.

‡ 1 Kings, ch. v. v. 29. The word הר designates the mountain of Judæa, or rather, in more general terms, the upper country, as opposed to the plain and the sea-shore. In any event, it is not Lebanon. The Jerusalem stone is superior to that of Lebanon, and, moreover, no materials foreign to the soil have been found among the *débris* of ancient Jerusalem.

§ The large Baalbec block is over seventy feet in length. Compare Josephus, *Ant.* xv. xi. 3.

|| *Mission de Phénicie,* index, p. 881.

well squared and bevelled at the corners.* The Gibbites appear to have directed the work in the quarries of Jerusalem, the Israelites and the Phœnicians working under their orders. The Phœnician element was the dominant one, and these people spoke and wrote Phœnician among themselves.† They seem to have resided upon what is now the site of the village of Siloam.‡

The first building ordered by Solomon was the palace for Pharaoh's daughter. It seems as if the king was eager to offer this princess a residence less unworthy of her. He then went on with the walls of Millo, which David had left unfinished, thus giving the city a continuous fortification—a means of defence in which it had hitherto been lacking.

The city, which, before the selection of David, had been confined to the summit of the eastern slope, rapidly extended westward, filled the space between the two hills, and covered the other elevation, which was much larger. The wall formed to the north a nearly straight line from the Temple to the gate which stood near to what is now the gate of Jaffa. The angle was assuredly the site of some important works, now replaced by the imposing tower called el-Kalaa. The wall then went southward, skirting the rising ground, to the extremity of the western hill, round

* *Mission de Phénicie*, index, p. 170. Read carefully 1 Kings, ch. v. v. 32. The passage is one open to grave doubt.

† See below, pp. 115, 116.

‡ The number of workmen given in 1 Kings, ch. ix. v. 23, seems much exaggerated.

which it made a bend. The wall then made its way towards the last slopes of the City of David, near the tombs of the royal family. This answered, in extent, to nearly half of the present city, but the area of the ancient and that of the modern city did not coincide, for the wall embraced to the south parts which the fortifications of the Middle Ages left outside. A circumference of this size would have contained a population of about ten thousand.

At the same time that these great public works were being carried out, the king had entirely rebuilt the strong but small house which had sufficed for the budding royalty of David.* The work, we are told, lasted thirteen years. Certain palaces at Carnac, Luqsor, and especially Medinet-Abu,† may still give some idea of Solomon's palace.

First of all, there was what was called *ulam haammudim*, "the hall of pillars," a sort of gallery with a porch.‡ This hall served as a propylæum to the *ulam hak-kissé*, or throne room, where the king administered justice and gave his ceremonial audiences. This latter room was covered with cedar, from the roof to the floor.§ The throne, placed upon a platform with six steps leading up to it, was a marvel of beautiful work. It was faced with ivory, encrusted with gold, and surmounted at the

* 1 Kings, ch. vii. v. 1 and following. It is believed that the S.E. angle of the present haram marked one of the angles of Solomon's palace.

† *Description de l'Egypte*, Antiq. ii. pl. 2; iii. pl. 1–5, 16–26.

‡ 1 Kings, ch. vii. v. 6. § Ibid. ch. vii. v. 7.

back by a kind of circular niche. The arms of the throne rested upon lions. Twelve other lions formed a row upon the steps, six on each side. The king's sideboard excited equal admiration, all the drinking vessels being of pure gold. "None were of silver, it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon."*

This was what may be regarded as the public part, open to all comers. Then came, in another court, the king's dwelling, decorated like the throne room; then the palace of the queen, Pharaoh's daughter, analogous to the preceding rooms; then the harem, of which the narrator, in accordance with the Eastern usage, does not make any mention. The palace of Solomon was surrounded, like the Temple, by a bastion formed of three rows of hewn stone, surmounted by cedar beams, which probably formed a sort of projecting roof.

In addition to this general assemblage of buildings connected with one another, there was what was called "the forest of Lebanon." The ground floor of this singular edifice did, in fact, present the aspect of a forest. Imagine a rectangular courtyard like the great building at Hebron,† with colossal stones, a single door, and scarcely any windows. Four rows of pillars of cedar wood, running parallel to the wall,

* 1 Kings, ch x. v. 21.

† *Mission de Phénicie*, pl. xi. Nothing is commoner in Phœnicia than buttresses formed generally of the vertical rock, with holes for the beams. The Hebron rectangle perhaps also served originally as a stay for pent-houses outside.

made four passages on each side. This gallery, with a flooring to it, served as a support for three storeys of chambers, fifteen on each floor. The windows were encased also in sills of cedar, and these buildings must have been very similar to the houses in Asia Minor, which are constructed of timber joined together, and a thick wall for trellises.

The "forest of Lebanon" was an arsenal,* in which were stored two hundred targets of beaten gold,† and three hundred shields,‡ these being full-dress weapons intended for the guard, which were only given out to them when they were to be put into use.§

There is nothing in our modern art which can give any idea of the style of these singular buildings, which presented the contrast of being very heavy in the mass and very light in their accessories, a species of pent-house, often with several storeys, which was erected against colossal walls.|| The timber of the best kind, which was furnished to Jerusalem by the Lebanon, gave these buildings a character which was unknown to either Egypt or Greece. A single block of stone formed the whole thickness of the wall, so this block was well polished on all its surface, no part being overlooked. The bases were of stones,

* 1 Kings, ch. x. v. 16, 17, 21; Isaiah, ch. xxii. v. 4. This may be taken for the Tower of David in the Song of Solomon, ch. iv. v. 4.

† *Sinna*, rectangular shields, covering the whole body.

‡ *Magen*, round or oval shields.

§ 1 Kings, chap. xiv. v. 26 and following.

|| *Mission de Phénicie*, p. 822 and following.

eight or ten cubits in depth, the upper layers of smaller stones, all of the same size, arranged according to what the Greeks styled the *isodomon* method. A perfect type of this kind of building is the great wall of Hebron, which is perhaps merely the external shell of a palace,* similar to that which in Solomon's time was called "the forest of Lebanon."

In addition to his great buildings at Jerusalem, Solomon appears to have built himself houses for summer residence in the Lebanon,† perhaps in the valley of the Upper Jordan, near Hasbeya. This was what were called "Solomon's delights."‡

Human life, Semitic human life at all events, had hitherto been so austere, that the fact of a man denying himself no fancy§ seemed quite strange and novel, not to say impious. This epoch, "when money was in Jerusalem as common as the stones, when the cedars were like the sycamores of the plain," came to be imagined as a materialistic golden age, very deceptive in its splendour. The popular imagination accumulated as in a dream all the details of this primitive luxury: gold, precious stones, perfumes, delicately chased vases, horses, chariots, and rich garments. Hence was born a legend, full at once of wrath and regret, as to those forty years of

* The idea that this was an enclosure surrounding the tombs of the patriarchs may have come later, when the lighter constructions had disappeared.

† 1 Kings, ch. ix. v. 19; Song of Solomon, ch. vii. v. 5.

‡ חשק שלמה.

§ Ecclesiastes, ch. ii

profane life, during which Israel, allowing its religious vocation to slumber, found pleasure in self-indulgence.

The charming episode, probably quite imaginary, of the queen of Sheba served as a framework for the first edition of the *Arabian Nights.* Man, as he grows older, likes to carry his mind back to a state of imagination during which no philosophic doubtings had troubled the enjoyment of his young man's tastes. A king at once wise and voluptuous, a man of the world favoured by revelations from heaven, a queen who comes from the end of the earth to see his wisdom, and tell him all that she has in her heart to say, a hyperbolical harem adjoining the first Temple raised to the Almighty, such, together with the Song of Solomon, was the interlude and the bright episode in the sombre opera created by Hebrew genius. There are hours, even in the most religious of lives, when people halt by the wayside, and forget their austere duties, to amuse themselves for an hour, as the women in Solomon's harem did, with the pearls and parrots of Ophir.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TEMPLE.

SOLOMON occupies no place in the history of the theology and of the religious sentiment of Israel, and yet he marks a decisive moment in religious history; he gave a house to Iahveh. Like his father, Solomon regarded Iahveh as the protecting god of Israel; he paid him honour at the consecrated spots, notably in high places, where he sacrificed and burnt incense. The most celebrated of these high places was Gibeon.* It was there, according to the legend, that he had a dream during which Iahveh appeared and gave wisdom unto him. The people, upon their part, sacrificed in all the high places.

The slight tendency to reason which David imported into Iahveism appears to have been continued

* 1 Kings, ch. iii. v. 4; 2 Chronicles, ch. i. v. 3 and 13. Compare 1 Chronicles, ch. xvi. v. 39; ch. xxi. v. 29. The author of the Chronicles, not knowing where to fix the site of the tabernacle created by the most recent additions to the Hexateuch, arrived at the strange decision of relegating that imaginary portable temple to Gibeon.

by Solomon. He never consults Iahveh by *urim* and *thummim* or by the prophets. The dream alone is regarded by him as having any significance.* Now the dream, a purely personal means of getting into communication with God, suppressed the Levite and all the paraphernalia of the old oracles. It was the revelation *par excellence* of the Elohist age, as it is represented to us by the Book of Job, an age in which man saw the visions of God directly, without human intermediary or that of any mechanism whatever. Accordingly, the priests and the prophets are much degraded in their functions under Solomon. The priests are no more than officials of the king; the prophets are fain to conceal their discontent at all which is being done, and to murmur in secret. The king, as the elect of Iahveh, occupies alone, in religion as in all else, the first rank in the nation.

The ark was still close to the royal palace, in a temporary position. The tabernacle which sheltered it became each day more and more of a Palatine sanctuary, concentrating the chief strength of the monarchy. Solomon offered great sacrifices there (*oloth* and *selamim*); these sacrifices were done in presence of the officers of his household,† who held high festival around the altar. The religion may be described as a court one; the people appearing to take little part in it. In order to do so, they would have had to secure admission to the

* 1 Kings, ch. iii. v. 5 and following. Note ch. v. v. 15.

† Ibid. ch. iii. v. 15.

palace, which was never an easy matter for the people. In the interests of the policy of the dynasty, and in furtherance of its centralising ideas, this *palladium*, under the shadow of which it was born, so to speak, would naturally be turned to some use.

The building of the Temple appears to have been decided upon in David's time. It was Solomon's *magnum opus*. The world, about 1100 B.C., was by way of being covered with temples. Tyre led the way among the Semitic countries, and possessed *Bethelim*,* which were no doubt imitated from the Egyptian temples. The idea of lodging Iahveh otherwise than beneath the tabernacle, especially when the king had a house built of great stones, in a measure forced itself upon the mind. Bronze was lavishly employed in the Tyrian temples at this epoch. Now David had gained, during his wars against the Arameans and the other populations of Cœlesyria, great abundance of precious metals.† Everything was ripe for giving to Iahveh the recompense which the protecting gods of that time esteemed the most, a house apart, in which their majesty dwelt, and in which they alone were the objects of adoration. Solomon chose for the site of the edifice the threshing-floor of Araunah (Arevna or Averna),‡ upon which there was

* בתאלם = Temple. Phœnician inscription of the Piræus (*Revue Archéol.*, January, 1888, pp. 5, 7).

† See above, p. 29.

‡ 2 Samuel, ch. xxiv. v. 16 and following. The *Kétib* of v. 16 has the article *ha-averna* to designate the spot where stood the angel of death. It would not be in the least surprising if this old

already an altar to Iahveh, which had been erected to exorcise pestilential emanations believed to issue from this spot.* The site was quite close to the citadel and to the palace. A solid foundation was provided for the building by a large embankment. No attempt was made then to let the Temple stand out by itself to form a perspective, for the building, which was rectangular in shape, and covered the space now occupied by the mosque of Omar, was shut in by others upon every side. The entrance was to the east. Thus the edifice had very little connection with the city. Upon the other hand, in all the arrangement of the work, the connection with the palace comes out very clearly. The king has his own staircase, his platform, during the sacrifices; everything is arranged so that the king may be enthroned in state and produce a great effect. No edifice was ever less national; it was a household temple, a palace chapel, not the temple of a great people or of a city having a strong municipal principle of its own. Not till centuries have elapsed does this building become a centre of life and an object of affection.

The efforts of modern architects to reconstitute the Temple at Jerusalem after the data of the historical books,† assumed to be exact, have failed, and always

word had been changed by pietist compilers into that of a Jebusite. Upon the other hand, we have found Greek or Latin words forcing their way into Jerusalem through Philistine influence.

* The excavations of the *Sakhra* rock may date from this period.

† 1 Kings, ch. vi. and vii. ; 2 Chronicles, ch. iii. and iv. The Hebrew text of the Book of Kings is very much altered. Here,

will fail. These descriptions, made from memory by narrators devoid of all notions of architecture, are full of impossibilities and contradictions; not a single figure in them is accurate.* The general physiognomy of the Temple, upon the contrary, stands out with great clearness. It was an Egyptian temple, of moderate dimensions, with a vestibule formed by the wings, the architrave, and two columns of brass.†

These two columns, supposed to be the work of Hiram the founder,‡ in any case of Tyrian workmanship, struck the Hebrews very much, and, as generally happens with peoples which have not the artistic sense, gave rise to many singular fancies. They were given names and called *Jackin* and *Boaz*. It is by no means impossible that these two words

as always, the Chronicles must be used very cautiously. The same may be said of Josephus. The description in Ezekiel, ch. xl., xlii., xlvi., v. 19–21, is almost altogether ideal, and cannot serve as a basis for a regular research into the architecture of the Temple.

* As a general rule, all the figures in the Bible must be taken with great caution. The men of the East never count, and yet they always name some precise figure.

† The idea of two columns bearing up nothing, and having a symbolic meaning of their own, is quite contrary to the Hebraic ideas. Admitting that such fetiches may have been erected by Solomon, they would certainly have been done away with by Hezekiah. Compare Amos, ch. ix. v. i.; Jeremiah, ch. lii. v. 17. It is true that no temple with pillars of brass was found in Egypt. But that may have been a modification which the Tyrian founders introduced into the Egyptian style. The portico unquestionably had two columns to support the intersections of the architrave, but all the columns of the Temple were of bronze.

‡ Nearly all the Tyrians were given the name of Hiram indiscriminately.

were written, like talismanic *graffiti*, by Phœnician founders, upon the columns : 𐤉𐤊𐤍 𐤁𐤏𐤆 "Let [God it] keep upright by [his] strength,"* and that in course of time the two magic words were taken for the names of two columns by persons not very conversant with Phœnician matters.

They were two Egyptian columns, of much the same contour as those at Ramesseum of Thebes,† with trellised capitals, the design being clusters of lotus and pomegranate.‡ They were hollow, but the metal was four cubits in thickness, so that they formed a solid support for the architrave which rested upon them. It may be, besides, that they formed a cover to an inner line of masonry.

The great door was enframed in lintels of wild olive wood ; the doors themselves being of cypress wood. A small door on hinges, cut into the large swing doors, enabled people to enter without the latter being thrown back. The woodwork was covered with images of cherubs, palms, and lotus flowers. These sculptures, or, to be more accurate, these fancy designs stood out in gold characters upon a ground, probably done over in some pale colour.

The *cella* (*hekal*) was only lighted by small

* These words are perhaps Phœnician, the verb כן being taken for the verb "to be." The phrase, carried on from one pillar to the other, would then be the equivalent of יהי בעז, "may it be in strength."

† *Descriptions de l'Egypte*, Ant. II. plate 28, fig. 1 ; compare plate 30, fig. 1.

‡ Compare 2 Kings, ch. xxv. v. 17.

windows, with open gratings, placed at the top of the building. It was divided into two by a screen, which formed at the extremity a small sanctuary, the *debir*, afterwards called the Holy of Holies.* The roof was of cedar beams, covered with planks of the same timber. The floor was of cypress wood, or deal, ornamented with gold tracery. The walls were panelled with cedar wood, which reached from the floor to the roof, quite concealing the stone, of which the wall was built. The woodwork was covered with figures of small cherubim, palms, echinos, and flowers of lotus, either engraved on the line, or carved in bas-relief. The whole was gilded, probably in several tints.

We do not quite know how the *debir* was lighted, for inside it was, so far as we can judge, not so high as the *hekal*. Perhaps it was not lighted at all, as is the case with the Egyptian temples. Mention is frequently made of Iahveh liking darkness, obscurity, and mystery,† in contradistinction to the open air of the high places.

The main object which the *debir* was intended to contain was the ark. This ancient coffer had probably undergone many repairs, and it is quite likely that it underwent many more under Solomon. The cherubim which surmounted it may have appeared paltry, and in the *debir* it was further decorated with two more cherubim in gilded wood, of enormous size, which

* This second expression seems to be posterior to the Captivity.
† 1 Kings, ch. viii. v. 12.

nearly filled the small chamber, their inner wings meeting over the ark, and their outward wings touching the wall.

The passage between the *debir* and the *hekal* was closed by a door of wild olive wood, upon which the art of wood-carving had been carried to perfection. The folding doors were covered with figures of cherubim,* palms, and lotus flowers. These light figures, overlaid with gold,† stood out against the olive-coloured background, and must have produced a very fine effect. It seems that the door was draped with a curtain, looped up with gold cords.‡

In front of the passage leading from the *debir* to the *hekal* was an altar of cedar wood, overlaid with gold, destined for the burning of the incense. Upon a golden table, close beside, was the shewbread, which was renewed every week. Along the sides of the *hekal* § stood ten seven-branched candlesticks of pure gold, five upon each side. They were fine specimens of goldsmiths' work, having, at their extremities, seven sockets, shaped like flower-cups. The branches of the candlesticks were curved in a semicircular shape, and ornamented with the buds of flowers. Golden extinguishers were suspended by small chains from each candlestick.

* Compare the fragment found at Ruad. *Mission de Phénicie,* pl. iv. fig. 7 and 8.

† 1 Kings, ch. vi. v. 32.

‡ Ibid. ch. vi. v. 21, corrected after the Greek.

§ Ibid. ch. vii. v. 49, would lead one to suppose that it was the *debir*, but upon reflection this is seen to be impossible.

The outer wall of the *cella* did not stand by itself, as it was surrounded, almost to the top, by three storeys of rooms set apart for the priests.* In front of the door, in the open air, stood the altar of brass upon which the sacrifices were performed. The king had a gallery of his own when he came to preside over the sacrifices he was offering.†

All this block of buildings was surrounded, upon three sides at all events, by a not very large court,‡ around which were three rows of large hammer-dressed stones,§ placed one above the other, upon which stood a row of projecting cedar beams that formed a shade for the court inside.|| This courtyard came, in course of time, to be reserved for the priests, who had their residences there. This led to the formation of a second court for the congregation, and a second outer portico.¶

Such was this small edifice, which has played so prominent a part in history. Seven years, as it appears, were occupied in building it. The execution

* It must be remembered that the descriptions of the Temple refer to the last stage of its existence. It may be that these outward appendages only developed in ratio with the ever increasing complications of the sacerdotal system.

† 2 Kings, ch. xi. v. 4; ch. xxiii. v. 3; 2 Chronicles, ch. xxiii. v. 13.

‡ 1 Kings, ch. viii. v. 64.

§ Compare the fortress of Ramet-et-Khalil, near Hebron.

|| 1 Kings, ch. vii. v. 12. Compare ch. vii. v. 36. The royal palace was surrounded by a similar wall. See above, p. 107.

¶ Ibid. ch. vi. v. 36, and the train of reasoning adopted by Thenius.

of the work was carried out with the greatest care. The materials were brought to the foot of the building, all prepared in advance, and it is asserted that, during the whole time the building was in progress, no sound of hammer or axe, or of any iron instrument, was heard.

The king evidently took great pleasure in his handiwork, and he was almost alone in this, for it is striking to note what scant mention is made of the people during all the time. The Temple of Jerusalem was a plaything for the sovereign, not a creation of the nation. We see very clearly what pleasure a few admirers of Phœnician art derived from building it, but we see no trace of enthusiasm among the masses. There was not a single spontaneous act, or a trace of true piety. The king is working in the interests of his dynasty; the people are silent, and appear indifferent. The ancient free worship at the high places, in the open air, evidently remained the form of worship dearest to the great majority of the Israelites.

It has been noticed that, several times in the course of its history, the Jewish people has shown itself passionately attached to things which had at first been forced upon it.* The Temple was a personal idea of Solomon's, a purely political idea, the

* The most striking instance of this is the circumcision, which has so little connection with the essence of Judaism, but which Judaism has never been able to abolish. In circumcision itself, the accessory past has come to be placed upon the same footing as the principal.

consequence of which was destined to be the placing of the ark and its oracle under the dependency of the royal palace. From the purely Israelite point of view, the Temple must have appeared to involve a loss of dignity. This localisation of the glory of Iahveh was so little in keeping with the true development of Israel, that the Temple had no sooner been finished than, as we shall see, the most advanced and active parts of the nation took no share in it, and attested by their schism to the fact that this edifice was in no way connected with the essence of Iahveism. The Temple was, at first, a sort of special chapel—like that of St. Louis, in Paris—not the gathering place of all Israel. All in the Temple was for the king and his officers. The prophets, who were the true devotees of Iahveh, look upon these innovations very unfavourably.* The religious development of prophetism in Israel and in Judah proceeds quite outside of the Temple until the day that prophetism gets possession of it, and makes of it a fortress for itself. The first *Thora* will be conceived in a spirit of reaction against the Temple.† Mosaism is, in one sense, only a reply to Solomon.‡ At a later day, Jesus, the great living summary of Israel, will detest the Temple and desire to destroy it, declaring himself capable of rebuilding it in a spiritual

* It is a mistake, however, to regard Nathan's discourse (2 Samuel, ch. vii.) as an opposition in principle to the Temple.

† *Sépher hab-berith*, Exodus, ch. xx. v. 24 and following.

‡ See below, p. 313 and following.

sense. The destruction of the Temple by the Romans will be the condition of religious progress, and especially of the establishment of Christianity. All the abuses of Judaism will come from the Temple and its acolytes. Not a single prophet or great man will spring from the Levitical caste. The last word of Israel will be a religion without any temple.*

No doubt this building, the outcome of a worldly art, will, when it has been consecrated by time, have its poesy, its fanatics and fervent admirers. But how much humiliation it will have to undergo before its stains have become obliterated in a halo of sanctity. Nearly all the gods of Syria will be worshipped in it, according to the caprices of the kings, Iahveh finding there many compeers little worthy of him. Politics, too, will enter the Temple, with their long *cortège* of crimes. The whole history of this edifice will, in fact, bear the impress of its origin. The work of a profane sovereign, almost indifferent in regard to religion, always at issue with the general spirit of the nation, the Temple of Solomon rather reminds one of the church at Ferney: "*Deo erexit Voltaire*," as may be read over the doorway of an edifice which has been converted into a hay-loft. The Temple, if we could have it before our eyes, would probably look to us like a dusty store-house of stage scenery. Centuries must elapse before any real feeling of piety can be gathered around these theatrical

* Essenians, Sibyllines, Christians, Epistle (said to be) to Barnabas.

relics. What consecrates a church are its saints; whereas from this Temple the saints at first held aloof, and the true heirs of the ancient patriarchs, those in whom their strong and simple spirit survived, will soon heap curses upon it. Like St. Peter's at Rome, in the time of Julius II., it will be the occasion of a schism. The true Iahveist, at the sight of this small *naos*, decorated internally like a harem, will say to himself: "The altar of unhewn stones, in the open air, was better than that!" *

* *Sépher hab-berith*, Exodus, ch. xx. v. 24 and following.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WORSHIP.

The influence of Egypt, which is so evident under Solomon, was limited in the religious order of things to the mere idea of the Temple, and to the style of the edifice. There can be no doubt that the belief that Iahveh dwelt in the *debir*, between the cherubim, must have entailed certain consequences. A temple is always the principle which leads to a great materialising of the worship. The temple leads to the inference that the god who dwells in it has more or less human wants. As soon as the god has a house, it is natural that this house should be made commodious and agreeable for him. The shew-bread, adopted by the Hebrews for their sanctuaries from a very early epoch, represented, in the first instance, the food of the god, the table bountifully spread which the Egyptians placed before all the divine beings. In the sacrifices of the high places, such offerings were not necessary; the god, that is to say, the air, the sky, the cosmic fire, consumed direct the flesh of the animals immolated. The god

who lives in an enclosed place has other needs. To place the pieces of meat before him, and leave them there night and day would have led to horrible putrefaction and spread disease. Pieces of bread, symmetrically arranged, answered the same purpose. The offerings of the first fruits seem, at this remote epoch, to have been very irregular. It is possible that they were deposited in the *cella*, from which the priests removed them by night.

The burning of incense was also a rite which could scarcely develop itself in a close sanctuary. It was natural that the house of the god should be impregnated with a pleasant odour, like the house of the kings, and that, in consequence, there should be a brasier for the burning of perfumes. That was all the more necessary because the *cella*, damp, and with scarcely any windows, must have smelt very stuffy.

It is beyond doubt that the people never entered the *debir*. It soon came to be inferred that the priests themselves forbore from crossing the threshold except upon certain very solemn occasions. A colder form of worship could not well be conceived. What use, for instance, could be made of candlesticks in a room which could only be visited of a night by bats? In reality, the construction of the Temple led to very few modifications in the worship. The processions, the varied liturgies which imparted such splendour to the sanctuaries of Egypt, remained unknown to Israel. The sacrifices continued, as in the

patriarchal times, to be the essence of the religion, and no doubt the rule underwent no change. The sacrifices were still made in the open air. The altar of the Temple was a *bama* among a number of others, within easy reach of the king and of the court. The idea never suggested itself that this *bama* would crush out the other *bamoth;* it took four centuries for such a conception to gain maturity.

The sacrifices of animals necessitated the use of a large quantity of brazen vessels, which constituted the principal feature in the Phœnician temples.* The Temple of Solomon unquestionably equalled in this respect the richest sanctuaries of the time. All the works of this kind were credited to a certain Hiram, a namesake of the king or kings of Tyre, who were the contemporaries of Solomon.† The legend represents him as the issue of a marriage between a man of Tyre and a Naphtalite woman, and that he learnt in his father's school the art of working brass.‡ Solomon is said to have had him summoned to Jerusalem, and to have entrusted his brass work to him.

All the bronze castings, said to be the work of Hiram, were the objects of universal admiration. The imagination dwelt chiefly upon the large basin of brass, which was called *Iam mousaq*, the "molten

* *Corpus inscr. Semit.*, part i. No. 5.

† See above, p. 115.

‡ 1 Kings, ch. vii. v. 13 and following. Compare 2 Chronicles, ch. ii. v. 12, 13.

sea." It was an enormous vessel, with overlapping brims like those of a cup in shape like a water-lily decorated with knobs, and standing upon twelve oxen, divided into groups of three, facing the four points of the compass. The shape of this vessel may be guessed from the Amathontes vase in the Louvre Museum. It stood in front of the entrance to the Temple, to the left upon going in, not far from the sacrificial altar. It was the central reservoir of the water required for the services of the Temple, the slaves filling it and drawing the water out of it with buckets, standing upon stools.

The water was then carried into small basins which were only a fifth the size of the large one. These basins were placed upon movable *mekonoth*,* or four-wheeled trucks, which were drawn by hand to the place where they were required. These trucks were regarded as masterpieces of carving. The revolving wheels were fitted on to their axles by the most perfected and elegant system of curved levers.† Upon the plates of the ledges were graved cherubim, lions, palms and festooned garlands, in accordance with the usual fashion in Solomon's time. The recipient of the basins appears to have been a sort of expanded capital. These ten elegant appliances were placed upon the two sides of the Temple, five to the right and five to the left.

* מכנה. Can this be the word *machina?* See above, p. 23.

† Compare the living tripods, the work of Hephæstus, in the *Iliad*, xviii. 373 and following.

The other utensils of the sacrifice, the pots, and the shovels, and the basins, were made in the same fashion.* We have but a very scanty notice of the forty-eight other pillars which Hiram is said to have cast for the Temple and for Solomon's palace.† These immense foundry operations were not performed at Jerusalem, where the soil did not lend itself to work of the kind, but in the clay ground of the valley of the Jordan, between Succoth and Zarthan.

The goldsmith's work was done upon an equally prodigal scale. In addition to the gold candlesticks, there were knives, jars, plates and censers of pure gold. It is said that the hinges of the doors were made of gold, and, moreover, the treasure of the Temple contained the precious things which David had brought back from his expeditions into the Aram and the north, and which he had dedicated to Iahveh.‡

Already, as we see, Israelitish art excluded the representation of the living figure, scenes from human life, and images of real objects, confining its resources to conventional flowers§ and animals, and to creatures of the fancy. This is a fact of capital importance, for it is very difficult to admit that, upon this point,

* I Kings, ch. vii. v. 23 and following. Compare 2 Kings, ch. xxv. v. 13 and following.

† Ibid. v. 43, after the Greek.

‡ Ibid. v. 51. Compare 1 Chronicles, ch. xxix.

§ Compare the Phœnician ivories; for instance, *Mission de Phénicie*, p. 500.

the pietism of Hezekiah's time can have had a retrospective effect, and that all the Solomonian works were touched up in accordance with the new ideas. We have thus a proof that Puritan Iahveism, preached by the prophets, had its roots as far back as the time of David and Solomon. It was anthropomorphism, above all things, which was dreaded. The plastic element was admitted, provided that it did not apply to anything which existed in nature. The cherubim were a thoroughly heathen element; in Solomon's time, they were sphinxes; later on, they were Assyrian monsters. The palms, the pomegranates and the coloquintes, which formed the principal subjects of mural decorations, were connected with the worship of the sun. Admitting that the pietists were able to stamp more vivid reliefs, it is doubtful whether they would have substituted for them a decoration which was in itself calculated to raise serious scruples in their mind.

When the Temple was completed, the depositing of the ark in it was effected with much pomp, in the month of *Etanim*, at the date of the feast (*hag*) which took place in that month. Solomon presided over it, and innumerable animals were sacrificed. The ark was placed beneath the wings of the large cherubim, and the long staves which had formerly been used to carry it were left in their rings.

What objects did the ark contain at this epoch? It is very difficult to say. The *nehustan*, or serpent of brass, dating from the time of Moses, was pro-

bably inside it,* as also the ephod, and a few *teraphim.* If the ark ever contained written documents,† it must be assumed that they were taken out when once the sacred coffer was placed in the *debir.*

From the moment of the ark being placed in the *debir*, Iahveh was supposed to dwell there, seated between the wings of the ancient cherubim of the ark and under the shadow of the new cherubim. There dwelt, in a mysterious shadow, the glory of Iahveh; a perpetual mist was supposed to fill the sanctuary.‡ The god dwelt in the midst of terror; no human eye saw him. At a later date, only the chief of the priests was allowed to enter into the *debir*, and that but once a year.

The religious service which Solomon established appears to have been of the simplest kind. Three times a year, at the festivals which then answered to Easter, Pentecost, and the Feast of the Tents, he went up with his assistants,§ and offered *oloth* and *selamim* upon the brass altar which was before the Temple. He entered into the *hekal*, prostrated himself there,‖ and burnt incense upon the golden altar which was before the door of the *debir.*¶ Apart from

* 2 Kings, ch. xviii. v. 4. The passage, 1 Kings, ch. viii. v. 9, is much more recent, and quite worthless.

† See vol. i. p. 309.

‡ 1 Kings, ch. viii. v. 11, 12.

§ Circumstance to be gathered from 2 Kings, ch. v. v. 18.

‖ Ibid.

¶ 1 Kings, ch. ix. v. 25, a very ancient passage, which afterwards appeared obscure, and was modified, at all events, as regards the punctuation.

these three solemn occasions, it is probable that the king often offered *oloth*, perhaps he did so every day,* at all events at the time of the new moon and on the sabbath.† Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, went to the Temple with his guards, armed with their brazen shields. The way in which this is expressed leads one to infer that it occurred pretty often.‡ The daily morning and evening sacrifice was not established until a much later period.§

Solomon and his immediate successors appear to have presided in person over the acts of worship performed in the Temple, which, it cannot too often be repeated, was little more, at this epoch, than the domestic sanctuary of the royal house. Special men were, nevertheless, required for the sacrifices, and, moreover, when the king was absent, it was necessary to replace him. Thus the class of *cohanim*|| acquired fresh importance every day. Lodged in the vicinity of the Temple, they lived in idleness and continual feasting, thanks to the abundance of the offerings. They had none of the rough work to do. That was left to the slaves, the Gibeonites, who were attached to the service of God's house as hewers of wood and drawers of water.¶

* 1 Kings, ch. x. v. 5. † Ibid. ch. iv. v. 23.

‡ Ibid. ch. xiv. v. 28.

§ Ibid. ch. xviii. v. 36; 2 Kings, ch. iii. v. 20; ch. xvi. v. 15.

|| The name of Levite does not appear, even at this early date, to be applicable to the officers of the Temple at Jerusalem. It was reserved to those who officiated at the high places in the provinces.

¶ Joshua, ch. ix.

The liturgical rôle of a "high priest," with a functional pre-eminence over his brethren, did not exist at this remote period. The king had a *cohen* among his chief officers,* just as at a still earlier period, the rich had a Levi in their service.† But this was a court function, not a hierarchical title, or a pontificate which carried with it a duly organised clergy. Zadok was the first *cohen* of the Temple, and his posterity is said to have officiated in it until 167 B.C. Even after this date, the sacerdotal caste continued to be styled Zadokite, whence came that name of "Sadducee," which filled so important a place in the struggles of nascent Christianity.

A temple always leads to the creation of a complicated form of worship and numerous services. It was fated that Jerusalem was to be a great liturgical centre. Solomon was the remote cause of the pompous ceremonial which is displayed five centuries later, when the Temple was rebuilt after the Captivity. All that relates to the dress of the priests, which was at first limited to the simple linen ephod, the excess of heavy ornaments, for the most part imitated from the sacred vestments of Egypt,‡ are but innovations of the great liturgists of the sixth century. There was but little sacred music in the old Temple. The details as to the bands of singers which David is said to have organised, the musical celebrities,

* See above, pp. 47 and 80.

† See vol. i. p. 285 and following.

‡ See the descriptions in Exodus and Leviticus.

such as the sons of Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman,* are fancies of the ecclesiastical chronicler of Jerusalem, who ascribed to Solomon's Temple what was true only of the second. Music in Solomon's time was part and parcel of palace life.† It was natural that a place should be given to it, as well as to the perfumes, in the palace of Iahveh. But there is little allusion to it in the ancient texts.‡ It is only in the processions that we find players on instruments and damsels playing with timbrels (*tofefoth*),§ and it so happens that the ritual of the Temple does not appear ever to have included female musicians. What becomes of the *urim* and the *thummim* in all these transformations? It was probably left lying in the bottom of the ark, and we know, at any rate, that it ceased to be consulted after the building of the Temple. After the Captivity, we find it reappearing in the breast-plate of the high priest,|| but in the time of the kings the lustre of prophetism quite reduced the odious turnstile to silence. The Temple was the first act in the successive destruction of superstitious excrescences of ancient Israel.

* 1 Chronicles, ch. xv. and xxv. *Jeduthun* is an alteration made by the copyist for *Ethun*.

† 2 Samuel, ch. xix. v. 36 (see above, p. 7). Compare Amos, ch. vi. v. 5.

‡ Amos, ch. v. v. 23, relates to the worship of the North, about 800 B.C.

§ 2 Samuel, ch. vi. v. 5 and 15; Psalm lxviii. v. 26.

|| See vol. i. p. 232 and following.

The extraordinary precocity of the Hebrew mind has often led to the appearance among the Israelites of certain moral and intellectual phenomena before they have ripened among other peoples. It is not out of place, when speaking of Solomon, to use the words reason and toleration. Fanaticism, at all events, was an element absent in the king's character. We do not find, during his reign, any of those national massacres, those wholesale human sacrifices which disgraced the reigns of Saul and of David. In some instances, even, Solomon showed a certain amount of religious eclecticism. The orthodox afterwards attributed this toleration to the influence of the strange women,* which, according to them, became more imperious as Solomon advanced in years.† These women are supposed to have inspired him with an indifference for the worship of Iahveh, and to have drawn him into the worship of strange gods. Thus the Sidonian women made him feel pious towards Ashtoreth, while the Ammonite women caused him to revere Milik or Milcom. This is, no doubt, but mere childish imagination. The toleration of Solomon was the outcome of the whole course of his reign. In the interior of Jerusalem, as it would seem, Iahveh had no rival. But Mount Olivet, facing Zion, had many pagan sanctuaries, which may still be seen.‡ Chemosh, the

* This is the favourite course of pietist historians when they have to explain away a religious defection. Numbers, ch. xxv. v. 1 and following; Nehemiah, ch. xiii. v. 23 and following.

† 1 Kings, ch. xi. v. 1 and following; 2 Kings, ch. xxiii. v. 13.

‡ De Saulcy, *Premier Voyage*, vol. ii. pp. 312, 313.

Moabite divinity, also had his high place.* In all directions the strange women burnt incense and sacrificed to their gods. The many strangers in Jerusalem —notably the Phœnician women—did the same.† No god was as yet sufficiently and exclusively the true god to expel all others. At Tyre, the temple of Melqarth, who was as jealous a god as Iahveh, did not prevent there being in the suburbs chapels to other gods, such as Esmoun and Ashtoreth. So far from setting Iahveh upon a pedestal by himself, the Temple of Solomon, in reality, proclaimed that Iahveh was only one god out of many, not inferior, but very little superior, to all the others—at all events, beyond the limits of the space specially consecrated to him.

* Perhaps upon the summit of the *Mons Offensionis*.

† See above, p. 105.

CHAPTER XIV.

SOLOMON'S OLD AGE.—HIS LEGEND.

GRAND reigns cost very dear. Israel had neither commerce nor industries to cover its expenditure. The timber for building, the artists, and the workmen, had to be obtained from the Tyrians, who took advantage of the demand for their services. We have already seen how Solomon discharged himself of his liabilities towards Hiram by sending him corn and cattle. Towards the end of his reign he had to make some of the territory of Israel over to Hiram, giving him twenty cities of Galilee to the west of Lake Hulé, in the region of Jaron and Maron. This was what was called the land of Cabul.* It appears that Hiram was dissatisfied with the payment, but nevertheless it was a fertile country, much superior to the rest of Palestine.† The debt which Solomon had to satisfy must evidently have been an enormous one. Discontent made itself

* 1 Kings, ch. ix. v. 10–13, a statement which is entirely contradicted in 2 Chronicles, ch. viii. v. 1, 2.

† *Mission de Phénicie*, p. 750 and following.

manifest upon all sides. The opposition not only attacked Solomon's government, but it struck at the monarchy itself. People made bitter reflections, and many of them repeated the words of warning which Samuel addressed to Israel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." *

They began to find that Samuel was right. At Jerusalem, the discontent was confined to murmuring, for the turbulent leaders of bands which had troubled David's reign, the Abners and the Joabs, had disappeared. Absolute monarchy had weakened the character of the people, and no one had the courage to raise the standard of revolt. But the material work had not yet produced its debasing effects; the spirit of pride and independence was still alive in the tribes of the north. Among the workmen who were employed in the building of the wall at Jerusalem, Solomon noticed a vigorous Ephrathite, son of a widow of Zereda, whose name was Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. Struck by the air of resolution with which this young man did his work, Solomon placed him at the head of the workmen of Joseph's house (that is to say, of Ephraim and of Manasseh). He little thought that upon that day he was providing a leader for the impending rebellion.† The Josephites were furious at finding themselves subjected to severe

* 1 Samuel, ch. viii. v. 6, 11–18.

† 1 Kings, ch. xi. v. 26 and following. This narrative has too clearly been arranged with a view to anecdotic effect, to be accepted literally.

labours which served only to further the glory of Judah and of a king who was a stranger to them. Jeroboam added fuel to the smouldering fire, and started for the north. At Shiloh he put himself into communication with the prophet Ahijah, who was in the most open hostility with Solomon. It is said that, subsequent to this, the prophet having met him on the way, when they were both alone in the open country, " caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces,"* telling Jeroboam to take ten, and meaning thereby that only Judah and Benjamin would remain attached to the king of Jerusalem.

The time for a rising had not yet arrived. Jeroboam did not succeed in bringing about a regular revolt. Solomon endeavoured to have him put to death, but Jeroboam succeeded in escaping to Egypt and finding a refuge with King Shishak. But the prophets commenced to speak in very plain terms.

Ahijah of Shiloh was doubtless not the only one who rejoiced over the approaching downfall of all these splendours, and who predicted that the rural tribes would soon have their revenge.

Israel's forces, in fact, the very basis of its moral conviction, were shaken to the core. All this outward splendour had only been obtained by heaping iniquity upon iniquity. The ancient nobility, the pride of the man who feels himself free, all had vanished.

* 1 Kings, ch. xi. v. 29-32

Every one had become a serf. There were rich men, but there were also many poor. The everlasting struggle between the two was about to begin; there was an end to the ancient patriarchal fraternity. And what had been the net gain of the revolution accomplished? Simply that a brave show had been made at Jerusalem, that thousands of men were groaning in the quarries of Judah, in the forests of Lebanon, and in the galleys upon the Sea of Oman, to procure for a few sybarites luxurious dwellings and to provide the bazaars of Jerusalem with playthings for the harem. This was really not good enough. It is not Solomon who wrote *Vanitas vanitatum*, but these words well sum up his reign. No one has done more towards the demonstration of the great truth, that whatever does not contribute towards the progress of what is good and true is a mere soap bubble or crumbling wood.

It was amid these grave symptoms of dissolution that Solomon died, after having reigned, like his father, about forty years. He was buried by the side of David, in the royal caves situated at the foot of the rocks of the City of David. If Israel's destiny had been riches, commerce, and industry—the profane life, in short—Solomon would have been a founder of something durable, for he did confer a somewhat brilliant existence, from the material point of view, upon a small nation which had scarcely got one before his time. But it is always an ungrateful task for a sovereign to work contrary to the current of history.

Solomon's work did not last beyond his own life. He had sought to extract, without transition, from tribes which were still patriarchal, a culture fashioned after that of Tyre and Sidon. In the prevailing state of civilisation, and especially with the moral dispositions of the Israelite people, this display of luxury and caprice excited a terrible reaction. The memory of Solomon was hateful to the tribes. His harem was the object of bitter satire, and in the love dialogues which were recited or sung upon certain occasions, the subject was always the same. A young girl of the northern tribes, placed by force in Solomon's harem, remained proudly and obstinately true to her lover, her village, and her rural life, despite all the seductions of the seraglio. In these improvised scenes there was no limit to the enthusiasm for the shepherd girl, while the aged debauchee was loaded with opprobrium. As a rule, the heroine was called Sulamith, and this name may possibly be an allusion to Abishag, the Shunammite, who played so touching a part in the closing years of David's reign, and upon the accession of Solomon.* What may be regarded as beyond all doubt is that the short poem, written at a much later date, which has been designated by the name of the *Song of Solomon*, contains the expression of the angry feelings of the true Israel, which had remained simple in its mode of life, with regard to a reign for which it had paid so dearly, and from which it had derived so little profit.

* See above, pp. 69, 70, 77, 78.

Solomon's reign must be regarded as an error in the general course of the history of Israel. The close of this badly concerted operation was a terrible bankruptcy. But in politics no action is ever quite valueless. Whatever is great, sooner or later brings in a profit. Even great blunders are converted by the process of time into great fortunes, from which glory and profit may be derived. Louis XIV., the Revolution, and Napoleon I., who ruined France, none the less must be included among the most valuable of her capital. Man, in order to console himself for his destiny, which is for the most part very colourless, is impelled to imagine the existence in the past of brilliant epochs, like so many fireworks which did not last long, but which produced charming reflections. Despite the anathemas of the prophets and the carping of the northern tribes, Solomon made upon one portion of the people an impression which found its outlet, at the end of two or three centuries, in the semi-legendary history which figures in the Books of the Kings. The misfortunes of the nation served only to stimulate the more these dreams of a lost ideal. Solomon became the pivot of the Jewish *agada*. The author of Ecclesiastes regards him as the most wealthy and powerful of men.* In the Gospels † he is the embodiment of all human splendour. A large crop of myths grew up around him, Mahomet took his fill of them, and then, upon the wings of Islam, this flight of many-coloured fables

* About 100 B.C. † Matthew, ch. vi. v. 29; ch. xii. v. 27.

spread throughout the whole world the magic name of Soleyman. The historic reality which lies concealed behind these fanciful stories is about this: A thousand years B.C. there reigned, in a small acropolis of Syria, a petty sovereign, very intelligent, free from national prejudices, understanding nothing as to what was the true vocation of his race, wise according to the standard of the times, without its being possible to say that he was superior in morality to the average of Eastern monarchs in all ages. His intelligence, which was evidently his chief characteristic, rapidly acquired for him a renown for science and philosophy. Each age comprehended this science and this philosophy according to the prevailing fashion, and thus Solomon was in turn parabolist, naturalist, sceptic, magician, astrologer, alchemist, cabbalist. There is only one ancient passage which presents a semi-historical value, and it is that in 1 Kings, ch. iv. v. 29–34.*

This passage was written at a time when Solomon had already become a legendary personage, with reference to whom all manner of exaggeration was current. The only portion of Hebraic literature extant which might be attributed to Solomon are

* With reference to the names of those who are mentioned as being less wise than Solomon, the author of the Chronicles (1 Chronicles, ch. ii. v. 6; ch. xv. v. 17, 19; ch. xxv. v. 1 and following) and the scholiasts who have given the titles to the Psalms lxxxviii. and lxxxix. have only made use of these names, which they found in the Books of the Kings. They had no original information as to these real or imaginary personages.

the chapters x. to xxi. of the Book of Proverbs, and the first sixteen verses of chapter xxii. But if this small collection of proverbs does in reality date from the time of Solomon, it was not in any way his own personal work; the most that can be admitted is that Solomon had the proverbs collected. No one ever composed proverbs as a consecutive work and of set purpose. Not only have we no writing of Solomon's own composition, but it is probable that he did not write at all.* It seems much more easy to imagine him like a Caliph of Bagdad, finding entertainment among the men of letters, who compiled in accordance with his ideas, or like a Haroun-al-Raschid, surrounded by singers, tellers of tales, and men of wit, whom he was wont to treat upon the footing of colleagues and brothers in the same craft.

A first collection of proverbs might thus have been composed in Solomon's immediate circle.† He may perhaps have added to it a very elementary natural history, a description of creatures, beginning with the largest and ending with the smallest,‡ or else moralities drawn from the animals and the plants.§ The *sir*, in the same way, cannot have

* In the above-mentioned passage of the Book of Kings, the author does not once employ the verb *katab,* "write."

† A collection of the same kind was made later by the men of letters in Hezekiah's reign. Proverbs, ch. xxv. v. 1.

‡ Compare, among the Arab peoples, the simple natural histories of Damiri and others.

§ Compare Proverbs, ch. xxx.

been well thought out compositions, put together artificially in the leisure hours of men of letters. The essence of the *sir* was to be inspired direct by some given circumstance. Here again, it might have been imagined that we had to do with a compilation with the *Jasir* or *Jasar* were there not strong reasons for placing the date of the composition of this collection after the schism, and for attributing its origin to the northern tribes.

To determine with precision the condition of Hebraic literature at this epoch, or, to speak more accurately, to enumerate the writings which were in existence at Jerusalem and in Israel at the time of the schism, would be a sheer impossibility. When Judah and Israel finally severed their destinies, about 975 B.C., writing had been in general use among the Israelitish tribes for more than a century. From David's reign date some notes on military history remarkable for their realistic character, some of which have come down to our own day.* It is more difficult to distinguish what dates from Solomon's reign in the weak and colourless prose of subsequent histories. Nor have we any clue as to the form in which existed, 1000 years B.C., those *Toledoth* or genealogies which were to serve as a basis for the future primitive history of the nation. The national souvenirs were still in an unwritten state. The imagination fed upon the heroic stories of the time of the Judges; the beautiful canticles of that age were recited, and they

* See above, p. 51.

may be regarded as almost the final specimens of a type which David, perhaps, was the last to cultivate.*

The culminating period for these great national poems is not that at which they are written; it is that at which they are sung. When Isfahani wrote the *Kitâb-el-Aghâni*, the ancient Arab poetry was already dead. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility, of course, that, as far back as Solomon's time, there existed a lyric *divan;* but that is not the collection of which large parts have come down to us,† whereas the parabolic collections of Solomon's time appear to have been, in fact, the nucleus of compilations which were afterwards placed under his name.

It may be asked whether, even from the times of David or of Solomon, some commencement of sacred history may not already have been in existence; whether the framework of the *Hexateuch* was not already sketched in writing; whether the old stock of Babylonian ideas, which formed the groundwork of the popular legends, was not partially committed to paper. This seems to me not at all probable, though one cannot say that it is impossible. The species of geographical chart which is contained in the tenth chapter of Genesis seems to date from Solomon's time. The fourteenth chapter of Genesis

* Certain declamations of the prophets are only transformations of the ancient *sir* Thus the Song of Jonas, son of Amittai, against Moab (Isaiah, ch. xiv. and xv.) is a very old one. It is the same with the Psalm of Habakkuk; but that is an imitation of earlier models.

† See below, p. 182 and following.

is in such strong contrast with those which precede and follow it that we might assume it to be anterior to the oldest compilations of sacred history. The oldest *Hexateuch*, that which is called "Jehovist," has itself a pietist tone far in excess of the religious sentiments of David's time, and especially of Solomon's. The Book of the Wars of Iahveh, or the *Jasar*, is referred to in it. Sacred history appears to me, therefore, as being throughout a pious work, parallel to the writings of the prophets, appertaining to the exclusively religious epoch of Israel; whereas the literature of Solomon's time seems to have had a profane character. A reversion towards the patriarchal past does not appear to have been in accordance with the spirit of the age. The prophets, whose reason of being was in these souvenirs, were reduced to a secondary part. The Bible had not been begun; there were not as yet any holy books; but the holy books of the future will comprise much tinsel due to the *sofers* and the *mazkirs* of the day. If the literary importance of Solomon was to a great extent usurped, the importance of his epoch in the history of Hebraic literature cannot be denied. Less fruitful, in one way, were Solomon's efforts for the development of commerce and navigation. Ambitions of this kind led Israel in quite the wrong direction.

The country produced but little, and consumed nearly all it did produce. It had no industry of its own, and no metals. Its wheat and its oil were only of value at Tyre. The race, moreover, as a race, had

at that time little aptitude for lucrative employments. The immense majority was anxious, as a matter of religious principle, to continue in the ancient mode of life, which was by no means favourable to the development of wealth, but which tended to ensure the happiness of the man who was free. We shall see the attempts at navigating the Red Sea renewed at a later period in Judah by Jehoshaphat. The habits of display and of Tyrian life will be resumed again in Israel by the house of Ahab. But all this was to be of no avail against the profound instincts of the people of Iahveh. This people has a mission, and until that mission is accomplished, nothing will turn it aside. After that is over, the people may possibly be inclined to take a quite opposite direction.

For the most singular thing is that this Solomon, so little in harmony with the soul of Israel in ancient times, is, upon the contrary, the complete personification of the Jewish disposition such as it has been known to us in modern days. When Israel has completed more or less the cycle of its religious period, when the epicurean and luxury-loving party, which has also existed among the Jews, side by side with the party which is full of zeal for justice and for the happiness of humanity, regains the mastery, Solomon will be avenged for the insults heaped upon him by the prophets and the pietists.

The author of Ecclesiastes will put in the mouth of the aged king eloquent periods, which he himself would not have repudiated, to express the absolute

emptiness of life, when regarded solely from the personal point of view. The Saducean is a Jew as well as the fanatic disciple of the prophets. Now, from the point of view of the Saduceans, which is that of most of the enlightened Jews of modern times, it was Solomon who was right, and the prophets who were the ruin of the nation. The fate of great men is to be taken alternately for madmen and for wise men. The grand thing is to be one of those whom humanity pitches upon successively to love or to hate.

CHAPTER XV.

REHOBOAM.—DESOLATION OF THE KINGDOM.

If the royalty of the sons of Jesse was still only half established in the northern tribes, in the country which called itself *par excellence* Israel, it was above all question in Judah. The law of hereditary succession, which had been violated from Saul to David, and which, from David to Solomon, had been neither correct nor without disturbance, is now an absolute one in the dynasty of Jerusalem. The eldest son of the king in the Jesse line will henceforth ascend without a rival the throne of Zion for four centuries.* This rare privilege was regarded as a special gift of Iahveh, to recompense in this way the dynasty which had erected an abiding house to him, in place of the unstable tabernacle in which he had hitherto dwelt.

Rehoboam, son of Solomon and Naama, the daughter of Hanun, king of the Ammonites,† appears to have been a man of limited intelligence and of obstinate disposition. This was the very opposite of what was required to carry on the work of David. The

* At least according to generally received history. See below, p. 268 and following.

† Addition of the Cod. Vat. after 1 Kings, ch. xii. v. 24.

thing more especially required was the exoneration of the tribes of Israel from the forced labour and burdens of every kind entailed by the expenses of the court and the great building work at Jerusalem. The North, much less weaned from the nomad life, had a great aversion for these towns and palaces of which the South was so proud. On the news of Solomon's death, Jeroboam hurried back from Egypt and renewed his intrigues among the Josephite tribes. Rehoboam proceeded to Shechem to receive the investiture of the tribes. It was there that the smouldering discontent burst into flame. The people recognised the advantages of royalty and desired its continuance, but they did not care to bear the burden of it. Rehoboam found himself placed between two conflicting opinions. He was one-and-forty, but he was surrounded by feather-headed young men, whose sole thought was to enjoy themselves under the new reign. The old servants of Solomon advised him to make concessions, at all events in words. Upon the other hand, the generation of courtiers which had come in with the new king was in favour of absolute government. They advised the king to resist, and the latter is said to have told the remonstrating tribes that "my little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." *

* Whips tipped with darts.

The rebellion then broke out. The ancient cry of the tribes of Israel (To your tents, O Israel),* which had already served as a rallying cry for more than one sedition, was heard upon all sides. Federalism and the partiality for the patriarchal life regained the mastery.† The Israelites departed from Shechem, resolved never again to submit to forced labour. The king had great difficulty in getting up to his chariot and fleeing to Jerusalem. The first time that Adoram‡ reappeared in the provinces, he was stoned. Jeroboam, whom his bodily strength and courage designated for the throne, was proclaimed king of Israel by an assembly of the tribes.

What was the royal army, of which the chroniclers relate such wonderful things, doing all this time? A proof that this army had no longer any serious existence is that it did nothing, just when it had the best reasons for acting. Rehoboam squandered his time on preparations for regaining his ascendency over the northern tribes. But the energetic generalism of David's time was quite extinct. The men of God, reduced to silence during the whole of Solomon's reign, began to speak again, even in the vicinity of Jerusalem. One Shemaiah, a prophet, rose up in Judah, declaring that the word of Iahveh had come

* 1 Kings, ch. xii. v. 16. Compare 2 Samuel, ch. xx. v. 6. See above, p. 66.

† Opposition of אהליך and ביתך (passage quoted above). Note 2 Kings, ch. xiii. v. 5, באהליהם. Compare Psalm lxxviii. v. 55.

‡ This name became mythical to designate the overseer of forced labour.

unto him, saying: "Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren, the children of Israel." It was an understood thing that whatever had happened was the result of the will of God. In truth, all human families are fond of indiscipline, and force alone establishes it. The political work of David and Solomon was irretrievably condemned. It had lasted about seventy years.

The opposition of these two denominations *Judah* and *Israel*, was already in existence during the time of Saul.* It was due, as I have shown, to ancient and deep-seated reasons. The breach this time was a hopeless one. Judah and Benjamin remained true to the family of David. All the other tribes acclaimed Jeroboam. A line drawn from the site of Bethel marked the limit of the two kingdoms. The efforts which will be made to join the two fragments together are destined to total failure. The alliances of the two kingdoms will themselves be of short duration. Judah will denounce Israel as faithless; Israel will disparage David and make mock of Solomon. All hope of anything like a solid State with its centre at Jerusalem is lost without hope of return.

One has always to pay a high price for one's ideal, however excellent that ideal may be. The love of independence and local autonomy, of a

* See vol. i. pp. 350, 351; above, p. 7. 1 Samuel, ch. xv. v. 4 (observing the omission of the three words ישראל ואת איש after איש); ch. xviii. v. 16.

rural life, of antipathy against the large towns and against the great centralised organisations, the distaste for the researches of art and for all those baubles in copper and gold with which Solomon had thought that he was doing honour to Iahveh, these were praiseworthy sentiments; they effected the religious grandeur of Israel, but they were also, in politics, the cause of its weakness. Israel, divided against itself and incapable of anything like energetic resistance, will be the sport of empires which are parcelling out the world among them.

The religious future of Israel, in fact, depended upon the liberty of prophetism. And this liberty, quite incompatible with the existence of a regular government, this liberty which would doubtless have perished in a strong State, the Josephite kingdom ever preserved, in face of the most desperate struggles. Jerusalem, upon the other hand, the capital of a very narrow territory, was reduced to being like a head without a body. Powerless in the political and military order, it became a purely religious city. David, who thought that he was merely building a strong city, found that in reality he had built a holy city. Solomon, while thinking that he had raised a temple to toleration, built the citadel of fanaticism. The lists were prepared for one of the most remarkable struggles of history. All the winds combine to swell the sails of him who will carry out the divine mandate. Whatever is done against him turns out to be in his favour, for, in suppressing his

egotistic part, he is compelled to fall back upon his sacred or divine rôle. If the work of Solomon had succeeded, the forces of Israel would have been squandered in the orgies of the young scatterbrains who formed the cortège of Rehoboam ; nothing more would have been heard of Israel and Judah except as petty, ephemeral kingdoms which had their little day in their own narrow limits. The thoroughpaced secession of the Josephites destroyed the vulgar, and assured the transcendent, destiny of Israel.

Hitherto, indeed, the history of Israel did not differ essentially from that of peoples of the same race and of the same region ; henceforth this history will be *sui generis*, and in no way analogous with that of any other people. The Moabites, the Edomites, the Ammonites, and the Arameans of Damascus had their Davids and their Solomons. None of these peoples had a religious vocation like that of Israel. The Hebrew people will develop itself in a way peculiarly its own. Iahveh will soon cease to be a local or national god ; the prophets will proclaim him to be the universal, just, and only god. The genius of Israel will thus found the pure worship—pure in spirit and in truth. And the world will display an invincible attraction for these strange oracles. Wearied of its old religious chimeras, humanity, a thousand years hence, will find that it has nothing better to do than to attach itself to the principle so resolutely proclaimed by the wise men of Israel, from Elias to Jesus.

BOOK IV

THE TWO KINGDOMS.

CHAPTER I.

POLITICAL DECADENCE OF ISRAEL.

THE effect of the division of a kingdom, already small of itself, into two rival States was an extremely lowering one.* All the material progress made during the reigns of David and Solomon was lost. The external influence of David was nearly annihilated; even its powers of defence were very much weakened. If a durable alliance could have been formed between the two fractions of the people, the evil would have been much less, but they were in a constant state of warfare. The reigns of Rehoboam and Jeroboam, more particularly, were marked by one long battle between them.† The Philistines, won over quite as much as they were subdued by David, were no longer, it is true, the same terrible scourge for the Israelites which they had been. But the Arameans, Egypt and

* The date of the scission between the two kingdoms is very uncertain. It may be put at between 975 and 950 B.C. See Duncker, *Gesch. des Alterthums*, ii. (fifth edition).

† 1 Kings, ch. xii. v. 19, 30; ch. xv. v. 6; 2 Chronicles, ch. xii. v. 15.

Assyria crushed, the one after the other, a country which had no longer any political or military institution to protect it.

The cause which had led the tribes of Israel to separate from the kingdom centralised at Jerusalem had been the overmastering fondness for the ancient life of freedom. We have often had occasion to point out that the tribal spirit, the habits of the nomad and patriarchal life, were still very keen among the Josephites. This spirit did not lend itself to any great organisation, whether civil, religious or military. Thus the first fifty years of the independent kingdom of Israel are quite identical with the centuries of the Judges. There was no capital or important town, no pompous Sultanate, with its staff of functionaries, no finances or central temple. The separation of the tribes was pronounced at Shechem, where Jeroboam continued to reside, the tribe of Ephraim, to which he belonged, occupying in the northern kingdom the same position as that enjoyed by Judah in the kingdom of the South. Jeroboam constructed several buildings in Shechem, but none of them equalled the splendid edifices which adorned Jerusalem. He fortified Phanuel, or Penuel, in Galaad, perhaps with the object of holding the country. The trans-Jordan tribes (old allies of Judah) remained, as it were, suspended between the two kingdoms. Probably, towards the end of his life, Jeroboam dwelt at Tirzah.* This small city, for fifty

* 1 Kings, ch. xiv. v. 17.

years the capital of the kingdom of Israel, was of so little importance that its exact site is now unknown, although it is supposed to be identical with Tallûzah, situated five or six miles north-north-east of Shechem.

The Temple in Jerusalem had been completed only a few years, and at that time it had not the prestige which it acquired later on. Jeroboam had therefore no idea that he was committing any religious crime when he chose the places of worship for his kingdom outside Jerusalem. Jeroboam worshipped Iahveh, but his theology did not go very far. He held a council, and was persuaded to set up two golden calves in Bethel and Dan.* Bethel already had a sanctuary, held in great reverence by the people, and at Dan, Jeroboam found the materialist worship of Iahveh established by Micah, with an accepted family of priests.† Bethel and Dan, which had already been long regarded as sacred places,‡ became the two chief centres of pilgrimage. Shiloh retained a portion of its religious importance, and the Reubenite city of Nebo, beyond Jordan, contained a sanctuary where the worship of Iahveh was organised on a grand scale.§ Whether through poverty or an inclination for the old forms of worship, Jeroboam did not build any regular temple. Nevertheless, the *bamoth*, or high

* 1 Kings, ch. xii. v. 26 and following; 2 Kings, ch. x. v. 29; Hosea, ch. viii. v. 4 and following; ch. x. v. 5; ch. xiii. v. 2; ch. xiv. v. 4, 9; Amos, ch. xii. v. 6 and following; ch. iv. v. 1 and following; ch. viii. v. 14; Jeremiah, ch. xlviii. v. 13.

† Judges, ch. xlviii. v. 30, 31. ‡ See vol. i. pp. 99–101, 299.

§ Inscription of Mesa, lines 17, 18.

places of the ancient type, underwent some transformations. Jeroboam established a *cohanim* at Bethel and Dan, without restricting his choice to a single family.* Any one could become a priest who wished to do so. He established an annual feast analogous to that celebrated in Judah, but at a different season of the year—on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, at the time of the vintage. He went once a year to Bethel, to sacrifice upon the altar and to offer incense there. The sanctuaries of Bethel, Dan, and a few other places—Nebo,† for instance—had brazen vessels for the sacrifices, and no doubt some covered spot to keep them in. The rite of offering shewbread was also practised there,‡ and this rite implies the existence of at least a *theca*—a room such as the rock-hewn temples in Phœnicia always contained.§

This explains the frequent reference which, although the northern kingdom had no temple to be compared with that of Jerusalem, is made in the religious affairs of the country to the "house of Iahveh," situated at Bethel or Shiloh.‖ The habit of going there to carry

* Error in 2 Chronicles, ch. xi. v. 13 and following.

† Inscription of Mesa, lines 17, 18. These should be read כלי יהוה or יהוה אראלי. See *Journal des Savants*, March, 1867, p. 160 and following.

‡ Hosea, ch. ix. v. 4.

§ *Mission de Phénicie*, p. 62 and following. It is probable that the *bama* erected by Mesa to Chemosh was of the same kind. Notice line 3, ואעש, not ואבן; compare lines 13, 18.

‖ Exodus, ch. xxiii. v. 19 (Book of the Covenant). See below pp. 307, 308, 310, 313.

the first fruits, to pay tithes, and to celebrate the *hag* three times a year, gradually became a recognised custom.*

Shiloh, in particular,† was, for some of the tribes, a kind of Jerusalem where the *hag* was solemnly held. The "house of Iahveh," in the kingdom of the North, had a door with wooden door-posts,‡ a *caphtor*, or capital, and a *saf*, or lintel.§ It was also called *miqdas melek*, "the king's sanctuary," or *beth mamlaka*, the royal "temple."|| The saying, "at the time when the house of God was at Shiloh,"¶ became a chronological formula, and this period was reputed to have lasted until the end of the kingdom of Israel.** There was evidently no idea of any unity in the place of worship. Mountains were still adored. Tabor, particularly, seems to have been held in great reverence, as a place for solemn sacrifice, by the tribes of Issachar and Zebulon.††

* Amos, ch. iv. v. 4, 5. Exodus, ch. xxii. v. 28, 29; ch. xxiii. v. 16, 19.

† Judges, ch. xviii. v. 31; Jeremiah, ch. vii. v. 12 and following; ch. xxvi. v. 6, 9; 1 Samuel, ch. i. v. 3, 9, etc.

‡ Exodus, ch. xxi. v. 6. § Amos, ch. ix., capital.

|| Ibid. ch. vii. v. 13. The temple of Moab is also called *miqdas* (Isaiah, ch. xvi. v. 12).

¶ Judges, ch. xviii. v. 31. Compare Joshua, ch. vi. v. 24; 1 Samuel, ch. i. v. 7; ch. iv. v. 3–5; 2 Samuel, ch. xii. v. 20 (an important passage, בית האלהים before there was any temple in Jerusalem).

** Ibid. ch. xviii. v. 30, 31. The parallelism of these two verses prevents our recognising here the tabernacle of the Levitical text in בית האלהים.

†† Deuteronomy, ch. xxxiii. v. 19.

A locality called Gilgal, probably on account of some *megalithic* monument,* dating from the old Canaanitish times, is often ranked with Bethel in religious importance. It appears to have been a very high point, in the neighbourhood of Shiloh, from which the whole country could be overlooked.

It was said that Samuel frequently held his assemblies and judged Israel there, so that in many respects the spot recalled Mizpah. The people from the neighbouring villages also went there to offer sacrifices.† The tribes of Israel were much attached to their pilgrimages, and as the scenes of the patriarchal legends were chiefly situated in the Negeb, particularly at Beersheba, they travelled this great distance in spite of the difficulty of passing through the kingdom of Judah, to strengthen their recollections of the old traditions and to seek the desert breezes.‡ These expeditions were also accompanied by rejoicings, in which the younger people took a large share, so that it became impossible to distinguish the religious and secular feasts. As in

* See vol. i. pp. 19, 20.

† This is frequently mentioned in Amos and Hosea and in the Books of Samuel. Compare 2 Kings, ch. ii. v. 1, and Deuteronomy, ch. xi. v. 30; Robinson, *Bibl. Res.*, ii. 265, 266. Now called *Djildjilia*. This spot must not be confused with the Gilgal of Joshua, an old idolatrous centre near the Jordan (Judges, ch. iii. v. 19), nor with the Canaanitish city of Gilgal (Joshua, ch. xii. v. 23), near Antipatris.

‡ Amos, ch. v. v. 5; ch. viii. v. 14. Compare with Genesis, ch. xxi. v. 25–31 (taken from the patriarchal legends).

the Middle Ages, pilgrimages formed a great portion of the pleasures of life.*

This all rendered the northern kingdom a much less suitable ground for the development of a complete religion, with its priesthood, than the religious centre formed at Jerusalem. The feasts were an instance of this, for they remained in a rudimentary state, and the Passover was never much developed.† But prophetism had found an excellent soil in customs that differed so little from those of the ancients. The prophets had opposed the building of the Temple and had encouraged schism. Bethel and Shiloh possessed a great number of these inspired men, who were extremely revered by the population. Ahijah the prophet, who was supposed to have foretold to Jeroboam his future royalty, was much spoken of, and he has remained celebrated in the annals of prophecy.‡ These men of God were a source of great embarrassment to the secular authority, but the true tradition of the spirit was really preserved in them. Crushed in Jerusalem by the authority of the house of David, the genius of Israel developed itself chiefly in the north. The mountains of Ephraim and Carmel became, during more than two hundred years, the scenes of the most fruitful religious movement.

While Jeroboam was thus counteracting all that David and Solomon had done, and restoring the

* Amos, ch. ii. v. 7, 8; ch. v. v. 23; ch. viii. v. 3, 10, 13, 14.

† *Iom moëd, iom hag Jahvé* (Hosea, ch. ix. v. 5).

‡ 1 Kings, ch. xiii. v. 11 and following; ch. xiv. v. 1 and following.

state of public affairs which had existed during the reign of Saul, Rehoboam in Jerusalem was endeavouring to preserve the remnants of his father's work. Solomon's power, always more apparent than real, vanished like a mirage, and for a period of seventeen years Rehoboam vainly struggled against this decadence. Anticipating invasion from Egypt, he fortified all the cities of Judah and established depôts, which he furnished with stores of provisions and arms. These precautions were useless. In the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign (towards 950), King Sheshonk, the founder of the twenty-second Egyptian dynasty (Bubastite)—who had already given a proof of his ill-will towards the king of Jerusalem by offering an asylum to Jeroboam after his rebellion, in the later years of Solomon's reign—commenced one of those expeditions through Syria which the kings of Egypt appeared to have abandoned since the last of the Rameses. The cities of Judah felt the first attack,* and the king of Egypt entered Jerusalem as a conqueror. He did not dethrone Rehoboam,† but he took possession of the treasures

* Maspero, *Zeitschrift für Ægypt*, Spr., 1880, p. 47; *Recueil de Trav.*, vol. vii. p. 100.

† The list of cities taken by Sheshonk, which can be read on the pylons of Karnak, is in a very bad state and is of little value. It commences by the north and is composed of lists of former conquests, which the adulatory writer ascribes to Sheshonk. Jerusalem is not named there. The word *Iehoudamélékha*, which is usually taken for the title "King of Judah," is really a city; the figure placed at the side is not Rehoboam, as has been imagined, but the symbolic image of a captured city. The inversion of the words *Iehouda milik* for *Milik Iehouda* would be quite as impossible in Egyptian as in Semitic (Maspero).

of the Temple and of the royal palace, of Solomon's golden shields, which were kept in the house of the "Forest of Lebanon," and of the golden shields belonging to the officers of Hadadezer, which had been preserved as trophies of David's history.*

The kingdom of Israel suffered quite as much from Sheshonk's invasion as that of Judah.† He took the cities of Taanach and Megiddo, and on his return to Thebes he caused a picture of his campaign to be engraved upon tablets in his palace of Karnak. One hundred and thirty-three cities had been taken, and they are represented by the figure of a captive encased in an elliptic oval or obsidional shield.

Thus five years after Solomon's death, Jerusalem was humiliated and polluted. The splendours of the Temple and the palaces, all the beautiful works but just completed and still in their first freshness were dishonoured by contact with the victor. Rehoboam replaced the golden shields by brazen ones, and these arms, used on state occasions by the *racim*, when they accompanied the king to the Temple, were henceforth deposited in the chamber of the royal body-guard, near the door of the palace, in-

* 1 Kings, ch. xiv. v. 26 ; 2 Samuel, ch. viii. v. 7 (Greek). See Thenius, p. 196.

† Maspero, *Hist. Anc.*, p. 340. This refutes the hypothesis of Jeroboam's instigation, which would certainly have been very admissible, particularly if any value is attached to the Greek text, 1 Kings, ch. xii. 24 ; according to this verse Jeroboam was son-in-law to the king of Egypt. Consult Blau in the *Zeitschrift der d. m. Ges.*, 1861, p. 233 and following ; Duncker, *Gesch. des Alt.*, ii. p. 181.

stead of in the royal treasury itself. The sovereignty which the kings of Jerusalem had exercised during more than three-quarters of a century over the countries that bordered Palestine had nearly ceased. The power of Solomon's son was limited to within fifteen or twenty miles round Jerusalem.

However, the royal house still retained much of its power, and in a sense it was better organised than it had been during the first two reigns. Rehoboam had a harem of eighteen wives, several of them being his aunts and cousins. The favourite queen was Maachah, a daughter of Absalom;* and her son Abijah or Abijam was appointed ruler amongst his brethren and heir to the throne. The other princes, twenty-seven in number, were richly provided for in the different districts of Judah and Benjamin. The strong places which they inhabited were really small courts, where royal luxury was displayed and harems maintained on the same scale as at Jerusalem.†

This organisation was probably imitated during the following reigns,‡ and it was perhaps for that reason, that after Rehoboam's accession the court of the kings of Jerusalem was no longer the scene of those terrible dramas which had sullied the palaces of Sion under David and Solomon.

But, except in external power, the reign of

* Contradiction between 1 Kings, ch. xv. v. 2, 10, and 2 Chronicles, ch. xi. v. 20; ch. xiii. v. 2.

† 2 Chronicles, ch. xi. v. 18–22.

‡ Psalm xlv. v. 16.

Rehoboam differed less from that of Solomon than might be imagined. He was Louis XV., after Louis XIV. The prophetic movement seems to have been almost null. The tolerance, not unmixed with moral laxity, which characterised the last years of Solomon's reign, was continued under Rehoboam. Religious eclecticism covered the country with altars on high places, sacred columns, and Aseroth. The hill-tops were crowned with these symbols, the groves concealed mysteries which were reported to be shameful, and according to moralists all the Canaanitish impurities flourished in the land. The ignoble prostitution worship of the Phœnician temples, the *qadès* and the *kalb* (dog)* were apparently found close to and almost under the shadow of Iahveh's sanctuary. As there was no religious inquisition, these abuses were certain to exist, but afterwards the orthodox historians exaggerated their extent and depicted a state of religious feeling differing from their own in the blackest of colours.

Abijam, son of Rehoboam, reigned only three years, and they were passed in constant war with Jeroboam. Abijam differed little from his father; like him, he maintained a large harem, and was buried with him in the royal sepulchre of the City of David. His son Asa succeeded him. Jeroboam ended his eventful career about the same time, and was succeeded by his son Nadab, about 932.

* See *Corpus inscr. Sem.*, 1st part, No. 86. Compare Deuteronomy, ch. xxiii. v. 18, 19.

CHAPTER II.

LITERATURE IN THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.—IDYLLS OF THE PATRIARCHS.

At first sight, the tribes of the north, by separating from the brilliant centre of Jerusalem, would seem to have dealt a mortal blow at their own development. But the history of Israel is so peculiar on all points, that what elsewhere would end in decadence was here a cause of progress. The true spirit of Israel, thwarted by Solomon, now resumed its ascendency with great elasticity. The prophets, who by protesting against the buildings at Jerusalem had led to the secession, were masters of the new kingdom. They applied themselves to reviving the ancient traditions, to reconciling them and establishing some order among them. Memory had until then sufficed for this; but now the necessity was felt of writing these histories and of arranging them according to some definite plan. The use of writing had spread considerably under David and Solomon, but it had never been required for the preservation of oral traditions, which was secured by their being so generally known. No one writes what every one knows by heart. Such facts are only committed to paper when the popular memory is already a little

overcharged and commences to fail. In ancient times, the most important literature was not always the written record, but the histories which the nation treasured up among its recollections.

This is why, as a rule, the compilation of a collection of oral traditions is not, at the date when it is made, a fact of so much importance as we are inclined to imagine. The book, which is only a collection of old traditional matter, is never a document of real importance at the moment when it is written. People who are familiar with the traditions do not use it, and even affect a certain amount of contempt for such aids to memory; teachers care little for it. This was the case with the Gospels and Talmuds, which afterwards became books of the greatest importance, but which, at their first appearance, created no sensation, because the contemporary generation was acquainted with their contents beforehand.

The oral traditions of Israel were of several kinds. In the dim background floated vaguely narratives of Babylonian or Harranian origin—those myths about primitive history and the deluge which the Hebrews had brought with them from their old country. The souvenirs of Ur-Casdim and of the mythical Abraham, combined with the adventures of a supposititious ancestor, Abram (the great father), furnished materials for the fabulous life of a patriarch, already reported to have wandered as a nomad through the land of Canaan and the Saharian regions of Gerar and Beersheba. The anecdotical biography of two other

patriarchs, Isaac and Jacob, and of Jacob's sons, particularly of one named Joseph,* who met with the most thrilling adventures in Egypt, formed the substance of the following period. The imagination of the Israelites, always impressed by the attractions of a pastoral life, grouped its most charming and poetical fancies around these names. Still, from an historical point of view, the traditions of this remote period are decidedly weak. Fantastic etymologies, regular puns upon names of places, were really their chief foundation. The wells, heaps of stones, caves, altars, and trees which covered the country, all had names, and round these names fables were woven. For local colouring, the traditionalists possessed an important document in the nomad life still led by the Kenites, the Jerahnuelites, and the Beni-Qedem, or Saracens. From among them the author of Job afterwards gathered the details which make up his wonderful picture. It may be said that this great documentary proof of patriarchal history still exists, the nomad life having the privilege of remaining always unchanged, reproducing the same types of life in the most divergent ages.

The true history of Israel, although still strangely blended with fable, opens with the sojourn of the tribes on the borders of Egypt. The special protection which Iahveh exercised over Israel was shown by the way in which he brought his people out of cap-

* These were really the ancient names of tribes. The full title was Jacob-el, Joseph-el, etc. See vol. i. pp. 90, 99.

tivity and fed them in the desert. The life of Moses, the legendary ruler, who led the people through this trial, gradually assumed a definite shape, and the supernatural already played an important part in it; but the idea had not, it would appear, as yet occurred to any one that this Moses was in any respect a legislator, nor that any divine laws had been revealed to him. The Israelitish reminiscences assumed a definite tone of precision and reality from the moment that the people, having crossed the desert, drew near to the land of Canaan.

This double series of traditions resulted in two narratives, which followed each other, or were perhaps looked upon as one book. At that date, men's ideas upon the identity of a book were very different from what they now are. One of these narratives was a kind of patriarchal history, which had been absorbed by more recent versions.* But did not this book itself contain details that had been written previously? † This no one can vouch for, and the knowledge, if attainable, would have very little interest for us, since these earlier documents would

* This is the document B or "second Elohist" of the German critics. Connected passages of it are found in the fourth and sixth chapters of Genesis, then in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters and afterwards in long extracts, commencing in the eighteenth chapter. Consult for analysis of details, Dillmann's Commentary, which contains a summary of all previous works, particularly those of Wellhausen.

† For instance, the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, where we find "Abram the Hebrew, who dwelt in the plain of Mamre, the Amorite," introduced without preparation.

have been nearly contemporary with the compilation of the book itself, and therefore the question of unity of authorship has, under such circumstances, little value.

The book to which we refer, so far as we can judge after the alterations made during succeeding centuries, does not bear the essential characteristics of a sacred book. It had no definite religious tendency, although Iahveh's preference for Israel was already manifested. In it God is indicated by the word *Ha-elohim,* the plurality implied in the word appearing also in several places ; the messenger of God is called *maleak Ha-elohim.** The great aim was to enhance the interest and charm of the narrative. The primitive ages of humanity are described, although it may be doubted whether there was any allusion in it to the creation and the deluge. These early narratives appear to have had much analogy with the Phœnician fables, preserved in the fragments of Sanchoniathon.

From them came many of the passages which are quite unintelligible to the editors of a more modern age, and which are, as it were, obscure gaps in the actual text of the Bible ; for instance, the fourth chapter of Genesis, which recalls the Phœnician myths of the first inventors ; the song of Lamech to his wives,

* Genesis, ch. xxi. v. 17 ; ch. xxxi. v. 11 ; Exodus, ch. xiv. v. 19. In a number of places the Jehovist version has substituted *maleak Iahveh :* see for instance Genesis, ch. xxii. v. 11 ; Exodus, ch. iii. v. 2, 4.

which presents a most curious problem; the recital (touched up) of the love of the sons of God for the daughters of men, and of the giants who were born to them;* the incident of Noah's drunkenness; the curse upon Ham in Canaan and the ethnographical account given with it; the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, throwing light upon the most ancient times; the fifteenth chapter of the same book, the first account of the alliance between Iahveh and Abram, where the details of the sacrifice are dwelt upon with singular savageness.

And he said unto him, I am the Lord who brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? And he said unto him, take me a heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon. And Abram took all these (animals) and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. And when the birds of prey came down upon the carcases, Abram drove them away. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and lo, an horror, a great darkness fell upon him. . . . And when the sun went down and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a brand of fire that passed between those pieces.

To the same source may be referred the account of the catastrophe of Sodom, produced by three Elohim travellers, and the very curious twentieth chapter of Genesis, which contains the first version of Abraham's adventure with Abimelech.† Traces

* See vol. i. p. 33.

† Notice the plural התעו, having as subject אלהים, Genesis, ch. xx. v. 13.

of the same document may be recognised in the portion relating to Ishmael,* and in the story of the sacrifice of Isaac, a sacrifice inspired not by faith but by fear of the Elohim.† At this distance of time the character of Abraham, represented as a kind of respectable and grandiose *moslem*, stands out with wonderful majesty.

The primitive version comes up again almost uninterruptedly in the history of Isaac and throughout the legend of Jacob, which is marked by a striking mixture of mythology, of rough sublimity, of concentrated idealism and of the greatest *naïveté*. One feels that one is very far from the prophetic era when reading these histories, where God connives at the most transparent frauds, and even commits petty rogueries for his favourite.‡ The protecting God watches the interests of his *protégé* only,§ and, in the selection of this *protégé*, he is governed by the most childish despotism, no moral motive appearing to guide his choice. But in return, it takes very little to arouse him. The God of Bethel exerts his power over the colour of the animals in Jacob's flocks and herds.|| The author considers this quite natural, like the little girl who, having been taught to pray, at

* The legend of Ishmael according to the ancient document is found in Genesis, ch. xxi. v. 9–21.

† Genesis, ch. xxii. v. 12.

‡ Ibid. ch. xxxi. (the whole chapter).

§ Ibid v. 24, 29, 30, 42; ch. xxxii. v. 12; ch. xxxiii. v. 10, 11; ch. xxxix. v. 2, 3, 5, 23.

|| Ibid. ch. xxxi. v. 10–13.

once implores the good God to work a miracle for her doll.

Blended with all this, a scarcely veiled polytheism is betrayed on every page. The author admits that from time to time camps of Elohim are met with in the fields; some of them come to meet the stranger and converse with him.* At another time they visit him in a dream; a painful struggle is prolonged until dawn; as soon as the light appears they leave him, bidding him farewell.† The wonderful beauty of this part of Genesis is entirely due to the old forgotten narrator of the tenth century. The gem of the book is the charming romance of Joseph, the earliest of romances, and the only one that has not grown old. The general plot and essential portions of this delicious story already existed in a perfectly characteristic form in the oldest editions of the legendary sayings of the north.

In what state does the legend of Moses appear in this primitive narrative? This is very difficult to say, since we cannot know exactly whether the allusions to Moses were found in the Book of the Legends of the Patriarchs, in the Book of the Wars of Iahveh, of which we shall presently speak, or in both of them. The curious passage‡ in which Iahveh meets Moses in one of the gorges of Sinai, seeks to kill him, and only frees him when Zipporah has cir-

* Genesis, ch. xxxii. v. 2, 3 (completed by the Greek).

† Ibid. ch. xxx. v. 25 and following.

‡ Exodus, ch. iv. v. 24–26.

cumcised her son with a flint,* doubtless belonged to the oldest version.† Miriam had a place in these ancient recitals,‡ and perhaps, even at that time, verses were attributed to her which afterwards developed into the canticle on the miraculous passage through the Red Sea.§ The incident of Jethro also contains characteristic evidence of its great antiquity.||

The theophany of Mount Horeb¶ was, moreover, treated as being of comparatively little moment, being, as it would appear, simply a renewal of the covenant between Iahveh and his people. But it is quite certain that the Keraunian character of Iahveh was forcibly displayed. Thunder and lightning, dark clouds and tempest, these are in these ancient records the indispensable accompaniment of the presence of Iahveh. Throughout the wanderings in the desert, Moses only filled the position of chief amongst several other leaders.** Some precise details upon the topography of the peninsula of Sinai may perhaps have served to connect these accounts, and as the journey in the peninsula was very short,

* See vol. i. p. 106, note ‡; p. 161.

† Perhaps it was also the case with the passage Numbers, ch. xi. v. 1–3.

‡ Micah, ch. vi. v. 4.

§ Exodus, ch. xv. v. 20, 21.

|| Ibid. ch. xviii.

¶ Ibid. ch. iii. v. 2; ch. xvii. v. 6; ch. xxxiii. v. 18; compare the legend of Elisha, 1 Kings, ch. xix. v. 8. The Deuteronomist adopted this geographical designation. See vol. i. p. 163, note. The Jehovist and Elohist preferred *Sinai*. See Dillmann, *Exode*, p. 21.

** See vol. i. pp. 143, 144, 175.

Heshbon and the borders of Moab were reached almost immediately; and here the heroic history commenced.

The book was essentially an Israelitish book, in the meaning which the schism of the ten tribes had made customary.* The end proposed was to confirm the Israelitish legends, to explain in a lofty fashion the origin of the holy places of Israel, to attribute to the ancestors of the tribes the possession of all the ancient good things of the country, the wells, the sacred woods, and the turpentine trees, to the exclusion of the natives and Philistines. Joseph, the father of Ephraim and Manasseh, is everywhere exalted; † Ephraim and Manasseh receive the warmest blessings; ‡ Ephraim, although supposed to be the younger son, is preferred to Manasseh.§ Reuben appears treated with marked leniency.‖ In the eyes of the author, Bethel is the true sanctuary of Israel, and one narrative is intended to establish the fact it is the duty of all the descendants of Jacob to pay tithes there.¶ Shechem is the centre of the family of Israel.** The trans-Jordan region of Galaad and the deserts beyond Gerar and Beersheba occupy

* See particularly Genesis, ch. xlviii.

† Genesis, ch. xlviii. v. 20, 22. Compare Joshua, ch. xvii. v. 14–18 (taken from the Book of the Wars).

‡ Genesis, ch. xlviii. v. 8 and following.

§ Ibid. v. 17 and following.

‖ Ibid. ch. xxxvii. v. 21, 29; ch. xlii. v. 22, 37.

¶ Ibid. ch. xxviii. v. 19–22; ch. xxxv. v. 15.

** Ibid. ch. l. v. 25, compared with Joshua, ch. xxiv. v. 32.

an important position in the narrative. Beersheba particularly is treated as a holy spot; its wells and tamarisk groves form, as it were, the centre of the religion which efforts are being made to found.* Every well in the desert to the south of Judah has its legend, the common inheritance in most cases of both Israel and Ishmael.†

On the other hand, the country of Judah appears to be scarcely mentioned. The author preferred local legends; he knew them thoroughly, and if he had little to say about Judah, he was evidently quite willing to ignore the country. It is difficult to think that the legend of Tamar‡ was not dictated by deliberate ill-will towards the family of Judah, for in it the patriarch is completely sacrificed and his family is represented as descended from an impure source and sullied by every crime. As regards religion, the author's ideas were very liberal. Already his antipathy to the *teraphim*, the idols and amulets used by the pagans,§ is distinctly shown, but there is no indication of any tendency towards the centralisation of worship. Altars to Iahveh are raised on every side, but the author only regards them as a proof of legitimate piety.‖

The book of the legends of the Israelites was the

* Genesis, ch. xxi. v. 22–34 (in verse 33 read עליון, instead of עולם); ch. xxvi. v. 25–33. Compare Amos, ch. v. v. 5; ch. viii. v. 14.

† Genesis, ch. xvi.; ch. xxi.; ch. xxv.

‡ Ibid. ch. xxxviii.

§ Ibid. ch. xxxv. v. 2 and following.

‖ Ibid. ch. xxviii. v. 22; ch. xxxiii. v. 20.

commencement of the Bible, above all, of the Bible as poets and artists have understood the word. The stamp of popular tradition is fresh upon it, resembling, as it were, coin newly issued from the mint. It can only be compared to the Greek Homer. The interest which children take in these narratives is their highest praise. Homer and the Bible are the two children's books which surpass all others.* They are the only two written for a public resembling children, an inquisitive, good-natured public, easy to please, having no theological after-thought, either in the way of affirmation or negation.

If we possessed the entire work of the narrator of Bethel or Shechem, we should no doubt see that in it dwelt all the secret of the Hebraic beauty which has fascinated the world as completely as that of Greece. This unknown writer has created half the poetry of humanity, his stories are like a breath of the spring-time of the world; their freshness is only equalled by their crude grandeur. Man, when these pages were written, still lived in a world of myths.† His perceptions of the divine were in a state of hallucination; multitudes of Elohim filled the air, manifested by mysterious whispers, unknown noises, and terrors which produced panic.‡ Man had nocturnal struggles with them, out of which he emerged

* The same may in a measure be said of the Gospels, the appearance of Christianity having restored a kind of spiritual childhood and renewed youth to humanity.

† See particularly in the legends of Jacob.

‡ Genesis, ch. xxxv. v. 5.

wounded. Elohim appeared in triple form,* and his sons take unto them wives of the daughters of men.† Morality is scarcely born; the mind of Elohim is capricious, sometimes absurd. The world is very small. Heaven is reached with a ladder, or rather a pyramid with steps.‡ Messengers constantly pass from earth to the empyrean. Manifestations of the divine presence and visions of angels are frequent. Dreams are celestial revelations, visions of God.

Our writer's ethnographical myths are, above all, wonderfully profound. In this respect he seems to have some intention of offending, or violating nature, in order to let the reader feel that the incidents which take place are beyond the pale of reality. The records of the love of the sons of God for the daughters of men, of Lot and his daughters, of Ham's mocking at his father's nakedness, of the prenatal struggle between Esau and Jacob, contain colossal incongruities which can offend only the narrowest prudery, and which explain, better than any anthropological formula, the hidden mysteries of races, their sympathies, inequality, substitutions, mixtures, and hatred. The whole history of Jacob the supplanter and the savage Esau is, in this respect, an incomparable chapter, a masterpiece of ethnography.§ The opposition between the sedentary man and the

* Genesis, ch. xviii. v. 1 and following.

† Ibid. ch. vi. v. 1 and following.

‡ Myths of Bethel.

§ Genesis, ch. xxvi. v. 22 and following.

hunter,* the necessity in which the latter at last finds himself of resorting, in spite of his great success, to the dweller in tents, the idea that all hunters would die of hunger, if there were not some quiet men to prepare a dish of lentils for them, the final triumph of the peaceful vegetarian over the carnivorous man, could not be more perfectly expressed. Already a decisive feature in the character of Israel is shaping itself, a taste for a regular life, the assurance that a peaceful man will end by overcoming a warlike one. The antipathy felt towards military ambition is visible. Jacob is openly cowardly, his love of gain is not condemned, although at times it amounts to dishonesty.† Joseph succeeds admirably as a good steward and servant.

And the meaning of all this is quite clear and analytical so to speak. The myth, which amongst the Greeks appears to us already formed and therefore obscure, here comes before us in its very course of formation. The primitive writer of Genesis takes us to witness the act of creation. We see the bud of the flower gradually forming; we count the petals gathering one above the other, the manifold meanings agglomerating, according to the essence of the myth, which is to express two or three things at once. The result is grand, poetical, charming. It

* Genesis, ch. xxv. v. 27: "The one was a hunter, the other a plain man." Notice the difference between Noah, איש אדמה, and Esau, איש שדה.

† Ibid. ch. xxvii. and xxx.

is a boundless ocean, to be shipwrecked upon which is a pleasure.

A man dreams all his life of the girl faces which he has seen between the ages of fifteen and eighteen. A race lives eternally in the souvenirs of its youth, or those with which a long space of time has in some degree inoculated it. The book of the patriarchs exercised incalculable influence over the imagination of Israel. This primitive record gave the tone to all that followed, a tone which is neither historical nor romantic, neither mythical nor anecdotical, and to which no analogy can be found except among a few ante-Islamic tales related by the Arabs. The style of the Hebraic narrative, correct, shrewd, piquant, yet ingenuous, reminding one of the panting improvisation of a child, anxious to describe all that it has seen at once, was settled for ever, its magic is felt even in the ages of decadence. The Gospels will restore to it the overmastering charm which it always exercised over Aryan simplicity, little accustomed to so much audacity in the assertion of fables. Men believe the Bible and the Gospels because they are full of apparently infantine candour, and because of a false idea that truth is found in the lips of a child ; but in reality, a child speaks falsely by nature. The greatest error committed by justice is receiving evidence from children. It is the same with witnesses who allow themselves to be killed. These witnesses, so highly valued by Pascal, are the very ones who should be looked upon with the most suspicion.

CHAPTER III.

LITERATURE IN THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.—ACCOUNTS OF THE HEROES.

SIDE by side with the idyll, or, if it be preferred, the romance of the patriarchs, was found the tradition of the heroes, this latter being much nearer to history, and in some degree a continuation of the legend of the fathers. Caleb and Joshua were at the head of this new cycle, thus directly linked with the deliverance that Moses was reputed to have accomplished.* There was no lack here of traditional data. An element of capital importance came to the support of the popular traditions, giving them a sequence and a solidity which was altogether lacking in the patriarchal era.

I have several times insisted upon this fundamental idea of criticism, viz., that there can be no such a thing as history before writing is invented. But what we often find among an illiterate people

* The influence of the heroic narrative is apparent in the Book of Numbers, from the first exploration of Canaan (ch. xiii.). Joshua in this incident is designated by the name of Hosea, which appears to have been the primitive form of the word.

are popular songs, highly developed and of great brilliancy. Israel possessed a rich mine of this description of poetry, which could be traced back for two or three centuries, and which most frequently referred to historical events of which the direct remembrance was lost. Sometimes these popular songs contained sufficient information to enable the account of the event to be reconstructed; sometimes this information was lacking, or was deceptive, in which case the imagination of succeeding ages supplied its place. The *Kitâb el-Aghâni* of the Arabs is the type of this description of compilation, in which the songs long preserved by oral tradition are now set in a prose text, which explains them. The principle in such a case is that the poetry is older than its preamble in prose, which is only a development, and a frequently erroneous commentary upon it.

The most ancient national songs of Israel date from the very origin of the national life, from the time when the Beni-Israel, emancipated from Egypt, endeavoured to leave the desert, and skirted the land of Moab, in the direction of the Arnon. The song relating to the source of Beir, and that chanted when Heshbon was taken, are lost, like the morning stars, in the rays of the sunrise of history. The short *masal* of Balaam are closely connected with them.

The song on the battle of Gibeon* is only known

* See vol. i. pp. 204, 205.

to us by one verse, which has given rise to a very curious interpretation.* Deborah's beautiful song has, on the contrary, been preserved almost in its integrity. Lastly, the elegy on the death of Jonathan, and the opening of the elegy on the death of Abner, are quoted with the name of the author; they are attributed to David.

Of these seven or eight examples, three are referred, by special quotation, to two books—one entitled *Sépher milhamoth Iahvé*, the Book of the Wars of Iahveh;† the other, *Sépher hay-Jasar*, Book of Jasher or Jasir;‡ but the meaning of this title has quite escaped us.§ There is no doubt that the greater part of these two books was composed of popular songs; they formed either two books which completed each other, or the same work under two different titles. For convenience, we will adopt the second hypothesis, the accuracy of which—if accuracy there be—is of little consequence. Quotations from Jasher and the *Sépher milhamoth Iahvé* are found in very ancient portions of the Hexateuch,||

* Not so singular, however, in antiquity as for us. In the Homeric poems the sun is stayed for the most childish reasons. In the Odyssey, xxxii. line 241, Athene retains Eos in the ocean and only allows him to harness his horses, in order to prolong the night to Ulysses and Penelope. Compare the Odyssey, ii. line 413; xviii. line 239.

† Numbers, ch. xxi. v. 14, 17, 27 and following. (Notice מושלים.)

‡ Joshua, ch. x. v. 13; 2 Samuel, ch. i. v. 18.

§ The formula אז ישיר (Exodus, ch. xv. v. 1; Numbers, ch. xxi. v. 17) is simply an illusion.

|| Numbers, ch. xxi. v. 14 and following; Joshua, ch. x. v. 13.

which may have been written in the ninth century B.C.; and we must therefore conclude that the *Sépher milhamoth Iahvé* or *Sépher hay-Jasar* was written about the tenth century, at the end of the period the songs and reminiscences of which it was desired to collect.

It is a peculiarity of all the great heroic ages that, as a rule, they only begin to excite much interest when they are almost at an end. The heroic generation always passes away without writing its history. But it relates its exploits to a generation which is generally very pacific, and which places all the higher value upon these epic recitals because it has only a purely literary admiration for military virtues. The rough soldiers of Joab and Abishai must have had long stories to relate.* The adventurous life of David, crossed by the friendship of Jonathan, as by a silver thread, must have supplied charming subjects for story-tellers.† A number of songs and anecdotes of the times of the Judges, of Saul, and of the youth of David, were about to disappear. And then it was that, in our opinion, one or several scribes collected this rich poetical harvest, which extended over three or four centuries, from the Israelites' first approach to the Arnon, upon their leaving the desert, up to the accession of David. David was the last of those adventurous heroes who displayed a quite profane

* See 2 Samuel, ch. xxi. and xxiii.

† Incident of Saul owing his life to David's generosity twice related (1 Samuel, ch. xxiv. and xxvi.).

courage in the name of Iahveh.* From the time that he became king he ceased to act in person and to expose himself in the field. I think, therefore, that the battle of Gilboa and the elegy on the death of Jonathan filled the last pages of the book. There was certainly no allusion in it to the last years of David or to the reign of Solomon.

Everything leads us to suppose that the book of the ancient heroic songs of the Hebrews was written among the tribes of the north rather than in Jerusalem.† The book had the clear, free, rather savage, sober, and firm characteristics which distinguished everything relating to the kingdom of Israel. And the question is almost decided by the fact that in the portion of the book which refers to the period of the Judges,‡ there is scarcely any reference made to Judah, the heroic adventures being chiefly attributed to the tribes of the north. The unseemly incidents in the history of David, his curious associates in the cave of Adullam, his adventures with Achish, his open robberies, his campaigns against Israel, are more easily understood, when related by a northern writer, to whom David was only a bold adventurer, than from a scribe of Jerusalem or Hebron, to whom David was the founder of the royal house of Judah. Perhaps

* For the exact sense of the word מלחמות יהוה, see 1 Samuel, ch. xviii. v. 17. Compare Joshua, ch. x. v. 14.

† Notice the phrase "Israel and Judah," 1 Samuel, ch. xv. v. 4; ch. xviii. v. 16. See above, p. 152.

‡ This portion is represented to us by the Book of Judges in the edition of the Bible now in use.

there were really two editions of the book of heroes, just as, later on, there were double accounts of the sacred history. There might have been one edition for the north and one for the south, and it is even probable that *Sépher milhamoth Iahvé* was the title of one of them, *Sépher hay-Jasar* that of the other. But even within this limit all is guesswork, aad it is better not to carry it very far.

It can be easily understood that such a book, written from a purely heroic point of view, must have seemed scandalous in an orthodox age, when the *cohen* and the *nabi* had acquired an importance which they did not possess in remote times. In using the old epic book, the historiographers of Israel, no doubt, made many erasures and after-touches. But little necessity was felt for any apologia at that epoch. The historiographers allowed a number of details, particularly in the Book of Judges, to escape their attention, which furnish the most complete evidence that the supposed legislation of Moses did not exist at that time. So that the Hebraic history, such as we have received it, contained its own refutation. In one place it asserts that Moses gave Israel a complete code of laws before the tribes entered Canaan; in another it relates a number of stories dated after the entrance of Israel into Canaan, which notoriously prove that this code did not exist.

It has been the same with the Mussulmans. In spite of their unjust contempt for the "times of ignorance," they have not lost the epic souvenirs

anterior to Islam. The saints in the mosques do not read the old books of chivalry, but every true Arab delights in them. The theological system of Judaism does not, fortunately, admit of a "time of ignorance;" no pietism could make the Israelites forget the thrilling life of the *gibborim*, and these brilliant though secular stories had their place in the history of religion. Thanks to the way—which is usually inattentive through excess of respect—in which the sacred volumes are read, the most pious Protestants of the present day feed fervently upon adventures in the style of Antar, of heroic robberies and petty intrigues skilfully imagined and narrated.* Did Moses and Joshua appear in the *Sépher milhamoth Iahvé* or in the *Jasar?* Joshua certainly did. The verses of the song on the battle of Gibeon (Joshua, ch. x.), quoted from Jasher, allow us to conclude that Joshua was named in the prose account. The vision of the *sar-saba* of Iahveh † is one of the most ancient portions of the literature of the Hebrews. The adventures of Caleb, who was evidently one of the heroes of the *Sépher milhamoth*, are inseparable from those of Joshua. As to Moses, it is very remarkable that he is not alluded to in the song of Beir, a song which seems to have been the origin of the story of Moses causing water to flow with a blow from his rod. At Beir we only find the *sarim* appear,

* The masterpiece of this kind is the account of the first acquaintance of David and Abigail.

† Joshua, ch. v. v. 13–15.

"the chiefs," and the nobles of the people digging the sand with their staves."* And a still more serious omission occurs in the episode of Balaam, which follows, and which I imagine to be in a great measure quoted from the *Sépher milhamoth Iahvé*,† for Moses is not named in it, although he was reputed to be still living when Balaam enters the scene, and when there was every reason to quote him in such a narrative. It would not, however, be safe to conclude that Moses did not appear in the *Sépher milhamoth* or in the *Jasar*, as the military leader and deliverer of the people. The account of the exploration of Canaan could not be understood without a chief of the nation, occupying a superior position to either Joshua or Caleb. But it is certain that, in the *Jasar*, Moses was not alluded to in the character of the man of God and inspired legislator with which he was afterwards invested.

The names of the stations in the desert may possibly have suggested part of this ancient document. The foreign episodes, or those analogous to the patriarchal legends, such as Iahveh wishing to kill Moses; the *hatan damim*, or husband of blood; of Moses and Jethro, of his relations with the Midianite *cohen* Renel and his daughter Zippora, perhaps spring from the same source. Certain details

* Numbers, ch. xxi. and following. See vol. i. p. 181, note *.

† As a rule, when Arab authors acknowledge a quotation, it is usually much longer than their reference would lead the reader to suppose, applying in reality to several of the succeeding pages.

of these old stories might seem obscure to those who edited them, and would soon become, in the traditional form, quite inexplicable enigmas.

Although the *Sépher milhamoth Iahvé* and the *Jasar* must have soon lost their identity as separate books,* it may be said that the essential features of the two books have been preserved to us. The general tone of these compositions is reproduced chiefly in the Book of Judges, and this is the cause of the distinctive character which renders this book such a striking portion of the Bible. It is not history *ad narrandum*, nor history *ad probandum*, but history *ad delectandum*, like the *Kitâb el-Aghâni* and the portion of the *Kitâb al-ikd*, relating to the Days of the Arabs. It is an anecdotical history of an age that had become legendary, mingled with riddles, with childish play upon words,† such as would please a simple age devoid of rational culture. It is the heroic life, depicted in view of a century which still cherished it, by the account of a series of adventures only possible in a brilliant and untrammelled free existence. The author's chief aim was to interest an agricultural and warrior people. The style of all his anecdotes is military and idyllic.

* Hosea, ch. ix. v. 9, ch. x. v. 9 recall events which are now found in the Book of Judges, the catastrophe at Gibeah, the Levite of Ephraim. Micah, ch. i. v. 10 alludes to the elegy on the death of Jonathan. It is difficult to say whether they had the old version in their hands or more modern arrangements.

† The thirty asses of Jair, in the shorter notes, Judges, ch. xii. v. 8 and following.

He likes the stratagems of war, surprising exploits, details of pastoral and rustic life. His work is free from any clumsy trait or from a single line in bad taste, but it is also free from any trace of pietism or studied religion; it always displays the characteristics of the remotest ages of antiquity. In these narratives, the human conscience has the same simplicity as in the epic poetry of the Greeks. Man's thoughts had not yet reverted to himself, nor learnt that he had a right to complain of life or of the gods.

It is very probable that in the primitive Hebrew version, the ballads were much more numerous than in the present edition of the Bible. In the stories of Gideon and Samson, and particularly in that of Jephthah, some portions must have been written in verse, which the present account has omitted. But the style of the narrative is unchanged, the turn of an anecdote rendering it lifelike, graphic, striking, is the special gift of the Biblical writer. Hebrew has no rhyme used for narrative. Parallelism, the sole poetical mechanism in the Hebrew, is only suitable to a lyrical and parabolic style. Hence comes the peculiar fact that among Semite races, such as the Aghâni, analogous epic compositions are written, not in a continuous metre, but in prose, blended with verse. Prose narratives derive their beauty from the successful turn given to the phrases, and, above all, to the details, always so arranged that the leading idea is thrown into full relief.

This gift of anecdote has also made the great success of Arab story-tellers. Through it Semitic narratives have competed without loss of prestige against the charming spirit of the Greek *epos*. By means of its scientific metre, the Greek *epos* has attained unequalled majesty. But the Semitic narrative is much more piquant, and possesses the advantage of having no set text. The fundamental incident was the only unalterable detail, the form was left to the genius of the improviser. The Aryan *epos* had never the same liberty. Its poetry was always too scientifically regulated to be abandoned to the caprice of a rhapsodist. On the contrary, the Semitic story-tellers, — the *antari*, for instance, — like the *cantistori* of Naples and Sicily, weave their songs round a given incident.* This is particularly noticeable in the epic story of Samson, a history related to us in ten pages, while evidently each of the striking or ridiculous incidents which compose it, developed by the narrator, would take up whole evenings and nights. With regard to the Hebrew stories, we have only the canvas, the titles, the notes of undeveloped epics. The materials used for writing (bands of leather, tablets, and papyrus) would not permit the long and often charming digressions which a literature can allow itself when writing materials have become cheap. But since

* Among the Greeks, Æsop's fables thus continued to furnish the raw material for poetry, which each poet treated in his own fashion.

the language used by the peasants of Israel was a miracle of correctness, delicacy, and strength, these rapid memoranda have produced a masterpiece of art.

Israel therefore had, like Greece, a collection of epics, gathered into this primitive book of heroic songs and deeds, certain portions of which, easily recognised in the later books, have made the literary reputation of the Bible. Responding to a similar ideal, the Bible and Homer have never supplanted each other. They remain at the two poles of the world of poetry, and the plastic arts still continue to draw their subjects from them, for although the material details are without art in themselves they are full of noble suggestions. The heroes of these grand histories are always young, healthy, and strong, scarcely at all superstitious, passionate, simple, and grand. With the exquisite narrative of the patriarchal age, these heroic anecdotes of the times of the Judges have created the charm of the Bible. The narrators of the later epochs, the Hebrew romance writers, and even the Christian authors, have taken all their colours from this magic palette. The two great sources of unconscious and impersonal beauty were thus opened up at the same time among the Aryans and the Semites, about 900 years B.C. Mankind has lived on them ever since. The literary history of the world is the history of a double current which has flowed from the Homeric poems to Virgil, from the Biblical narrative

to Jesus, or, it may rather be said, Evangelists. These old tales of the patriarchal tribes have remained, side by side with the Greek epic, the great delight of succeeding ages, formed for the æsthetic guidance of generations less pure.

And it is because critics, more skilful in microscopic discoveries than in extending their views over the horizon, have not sufficiently realised the importance of this first literary stage of Israel, that they have not been able to measure the significance of the fact that the oldest editors of the Hexateuch quote an anterior work, namely, the Book of Jasher or the Wars of Iahveh, composed from ancient ballads. We find scattered portions of this work in the so-called Jehovist parts of the Book of *Numbers*, and again in *Joshua;* in my opinion it was the origin of the Book of *Judges* and furnished the finest elements of the Books called after *Samuel.* In fact the Book of Judges and those called after Samuel show us on the surface the same soil which, in the more ancient portions of the Hexateuch, we only find as a vein or below ground This would have been discovered sooner if these studies, instead of being in the hands of theologians, had been cultivated by men of learning, accustomed to the fine style of epics and popular songs. It would then have been recognised that, anterior to the compilation of the purely religious narratives of sacred history, there existed a national *epos,* which contained the songs and heroic stories of the tribes of Israel. This

book apparently ended with the accession of David,* at the close of his adventurous youth, when the brigands of Ziklag were all destroyed, and the adventures of bygone ages give place to much more peaceful preoccupations and more matter of fact calculations.

It was not a sacerdotal but a national book. The histories were heroic and popular before they became sacred. The word profane would be quite out of place here, for this word has no meaning except through its opposition to what has become religious. The distinction between the two lives was not yet made; religion penetrated everything; as no one disputed it, there was no need to confirm it. The pietism of Israel was the work of the prophets, and had not yet appeared. Iahveh no doubt already filled all these ancient narratives, but the gods also filled the Iliad and Odyssey, without these two books being considered sacred on that account. In the Hebrew *epos* every detail was arranged for the greater glory of Iahveh, but the aim proposed was not edification nor propaganda, and still less apologia. No one thought of creating arguments for the preacher's thesis. These early books of Israel were lay books, as we should now call them, in which only one object was considered, the preservation in writing of a surplus of deeply interesting reminiscences with which memory was overloaded.

* In the accounts of events posterior to this epoch, the *Jasar* is no longer quoted, nor is any popular song alluded to.

I shall set out, century by century, the transformations which took place in these legendary traditions and historical narratives which, even now, charm us and excite our admiration. Let it suffice for the moment to have proved that the legendary souvenirs of the patriarchal ages, the heroic tales of the conquest of Canaan in the times of the Judges and of the birth of royalty, were written about 900 years B.C. in two volumes of which we still possess considerable portions. These two books appear to have been edited in the north, probably in one of the ancient cities of Ephraim. One of them relates the mythological history of primitive humanity, then the stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph; we see it forcing its head above ground, so to speak, in the actual text, often halting and insipid, of Genesis. The other was the *Jasar*, or the Book of the Wars of Iahveh, the national epic poem, directly quoted in the Hexateuch and in the so-called Books of Samuel. These exquisite and perfect works, in the style of the Homeric poems of Greece, were not at that time religious books; although they were pre-eminently the expression of the genius of Israel, they were not books so peculiarly characteristic of this people as to prevent the surrounding nationalities, Moab, Edom, and Ammon, from having others that resembled them. Ammon and Moab had neither prophets nor *Thora*, but they perhaps had a *Sépher milhamoth Milkom*, and a *Sépher milhamoth Kamos*, for Ammon and Moab had their heroic traditions as well as Israel, and like

Israel had the habit of associating all these stories with their national god. How did these idyllic and warrior tales of a small Syrian nation become the sacred book of all the nations? This will be explained later on. We here come into touch with the keystone itself of the history of Israel, the point which constitutes its peculiar position, and which places it among the *Unica* in the history of humanity.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST INTRODUCTION OF MORAL IAHVEISM IN JERUSALEM UNDER ASA.

ASA ascended the throne of David towards the year 930 B.C.* During twenty years his father Abijam and his grandfather Rehoboam had endeavoured to perpetuate in face of all obstacles the traditions of Solomon's reign. With a diminished territory they had retained a royal pomp, which the whole of Palestine was scarcely able to support. The small court of Sion, with its exaggerated harem, its richly endowed princes of the blood royal, and its magnificent ritual, lost all its real importance.† No years in all the Jewish annals were so barren as these. Iahveh seemed asleep in his temple, resting upon the cherubim. The Canaanite and other rituals enjoyed perfect freedom. No prophet had arisen to blame the king or the people. Iahveism was essentially

* 1 Kings, ch. xv. v. 9 and following; 2 Chronicles, ch. xiii. and following, a very weak historiography. Here, as elsewhere, the Chronicles cannot be received as authoritative, yet they cannot be altogether ignored.

† Jerusalem and Judah are not named in the Inscription of Mesa.

exclusive and intolerant; the triumph of the jealous God, which took place under Josiah, about 622, is the last scene of a religious reaction commenced under Asa. Frequently interrupted, again renewed with redoubled energy, this conflict, which lasted three hundred years, is one of the finest developments of remorseless logic that history can show us. The interior force which created the genius of Greece and the imperialism of Rome had not more vigour or more originality.

Through motives which we now find it impossible to appreciate, owing to the extreme obscurity of the history of Israel in the tenth century B.C.—motives doubtless due to the daily growing influence of the "men of God"—Asa, in religious matters, adopted a line of conduct which differed totally from that of his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He lived forty-one years, and, as we shall see, bequeathed his principles to his son Jehoshaphat, who reigned twenty-five years. This religious policy, maintained for more than half a century, produced the most serious consequences. The Temple assumed a significance which had never belonged to it originally. From the private chapel of the palace it rose to be the one "holy place"—the spot where Iahveh dwelt, and from which he delivered his oracles.* The prophets and puritans, who at first regarded it unfavourably, now became reconciled to it. Time brought respect, each day added to the prestige which the Temple of

* Amos, ch. i. v. 2.

Solomon now acquired, and which had been unheard of before. Iahveism created the Temple, and the Temple, in its turn, created Iahveism, serving in some measure as its mould and connecting point. No one as yet believed that the Temple was the only place in the world where sacrifices could be offered to Iahveh. But the king was no longer the only person who officiated in it. The priests were of no importance as compared to the king, but, on the other hand, they gradually assumed extreme importance in connection with the layman who came to present his offerings. Already, perhaps, customs and regulations, the nucleus of a Levitical order, were being established. Probably, too, the priests inculcated the idea that sacrifices offered in the Temple had more efficacy than those presented in the open air.

But the point which chiefly distinguished Asa and Jehoshaphat from Solomon, Rehoboam, and Abijam was the constant war waged by the two former against foreign creeds. They substituted, in place of Solomon's tolerance, a system of proscription against every one who in religious practice was not a pure Israelite. Asa, it is said, carried his severity so far as to depose from her supreme rank his grandmother Maachah, the favourite wife of Rehoboam, to whom his father Abijam owed his throne. This granddaughter of David,* who must have been very aged, had retained the ideas of the princesses in Solomon's reign. She kept in her house wooden *teraphim* with

* See vol. i. p. 356.

the phallic details that so greatly scandalised the younger generations. Asa sacrificed the irreligious princess to the pietist party. The impure emblem was hewn down and burnt in the valley of Kidron. The Phœnician ritual was abolished, and the *kedésim* driven from the places they had sullied with their presence. War was declared against idols, sacred pillars, and the *hammanim.**

There is no historical information respecting the prophets of the time of Asa. Everything tends to the belief that they already possessed great authority,† that they even went so far as violence. More than once, as it would appear, the king was obliged to deal vigorously with his imperious councillors.‡ There was little progress made, but, nevertheless, men's ideas gradually cleared. In spite of the excesses inseparable from an infantine society, without tact or any sense of delicate distinctions, the small Judaic State attained remarkable solidity. The memory of David was aggrandised, his race was accepted as a kind of institution sanctioned by Iahveh himself. The Temple was a sort of palladium for the dynasty. This idea of divine right, accepted by the priests and prophets, kept competitors at a distance. Not one of the military chiefs would have ventured to dream of dethroning the man who was believed to be anointed

* Monuments to Baal-Hamon, as we now say "Virgins and Christs' for statuettes of the Virgin and Christ. Compare *baalim, asserim* or *aseroth*.

† 2 Chronicles, ch. xv. (to be accepted with reserve)

‡ Ibid. ch. xvi. v. 10.

by God himself. No revolution was possible under the rule of such a theocracy. In this respect the contrast with the kingdom of Israel was striking; the idea of legitimacy, the basis of the kingdom of Judah, was never established in Israel. Nadab, son of Jeroboam, reigned only a short time. An Issacharite, named Baasha, killed him while he was laying siege to the Philistine city of Gibbethon. This Baasha afterwards exterminated all the family of Jeroboam and was proclaimed king of Israel at Tirzah. He reigned twenty-four years.

The religious state of the tribes of the north continued to be a Iahveism which excluded neither images, nor the adoration of God under various names, nor the impure ritual of the worship of Astarte. But monotheism is an arbitrary creed, which always drives its devotees to extremes. The prophets never ceased to inculcate a Iahveism of a purer kind than that which contented the crowd. Jehu, son of Hanani, assuming the rôle of Ahijah the Shilonite, seems to have occupied, under Baasha, a similar position to that of Elijah and Elisha under Ahab.*

Asa and Baasha engaged in perpetual wars against each other. The scene of their struggle was Ramah, situated about six miles from Jerusalem, and therefore very near the frontier of both kingdoms.

* 1 Kings, ch. xvi. v. 1 and following, v. 7, 12. The history written in 2 Chronicles, ch. xvi. v. 7 and following, ch. xix. v. 2, ch. xx. v. 34, is entirely legendary and full of confusion. Hanani and Jehu ben-Hanani are the same personage.

Baasha took possession of the city and fortified it, so that, as Ramah commands all the roads to the north, Asa found himself almost shut into his capital. The strength of Baasha lay in his alliance with the king of Damascus, Benhadad,* son of Tabrimmon, son of Reyon. Asa then adopted a curious measure. He took the silver and gold which, since the invasion of Sheshouk, had accumulated in the Temple, principally from his own offerings and those of his father, adding to them the treasures of the royal palace, and he sent the whole of it to Benhadad to induce him to turn against Baasha. Benhadad accepted the bribe, and invaded the districts of the north as an enemy, attacking Ijon, Dan, and Abel-beth-Maachah, all the country of Nephtali, and the borders of Lake Cinneroth. When Baasha heard of this treachery, he interrupted the building at Ramah, and fell back upon Tirzah. Asa then convoked all the men of Judah, led them against Ramah, and took all the stones and timber prepared there for the buildings of Baasha, using them to fortify Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah.

The reign of Asa would have been fairly prosperous but for the deplorable wars between Judah and Israel.† He covered the land with strong cities,‡ and it is easy to see that he was in a state of

* Maspero, *Hist. Anc.* (fourth edition), p. 363. Compare Schrader, *Die Keil.* (second edition), p. 200 and following.

† 2 Chronicles, ch. xiv. v. 5 and following. This passage is missing in the Book of Kings.

‡ Compare 1 Kings, ch. xv. v. 23.

continual apprehension, and regarded peace as very precarious. The small armies of Judah,* armed with large shields and lances, combined with the Benjaminites, armed with small shields and bows, successfully resisted an African invasion, which descended on the south of Palestine. These invaders, who came from Crisim (Couschites) and Lubim (Libyans),† led by a chief called Zerah the Couschite, or Ethiopian, were stopped and defeated near Mareshah, lying towards the land of the Philistines. Asa pursued them as far as Gerar. The army of Judah, at the same time, smote the Arab towns in the neighbourhood of Gerar, and brought back a rich booty from the country, which served to replace the consecrated vessels of the Temple which Asa had withdrawn to win the alliance of Benhadad.‡ This prudent conduct seems to have met with little favcur from the enthusiasts, and one of the prophets bitterly reproached the king. It would even seem as though he had provoked some discontent among the people,§ for Asa was extremely angry, and imprisoned the prophet and all those who sided with him.

* Ridiculously exaggerated in 2 Chronicles, ch. xiv. v. 7.

† 2 Chronicles, ch. xvi. v. 8 (subject to caution). Zerah the Couschite has been identified with Osorkon, who succeeded Sheshouk. Maspero, p. 362 ; Ewald, iii. (second edition), p. 470. Observe that in the expedition of Sheshouk the same races are named. (2 Chronicles, ch. xii. v. 3.)

‡ 1 Kings, ch. xvi. v. 15, transposed in my opinion. It is a marginal scholium responding to ch. xv. v. 18.

§ 2 Chronicles, ch. xvi. v. 7–10.

Asa died of gout at a very advanced age.* He had made himself a tomb in the caves of the royal sepulchre of the City of David, and was buried there after being embalmed, large fires being lighted in his honour according to custom.† He was succeeded by Jehoshaphat, his son by Ayouba, daughter of Silhi. The new king was then thirty-five years old.

Jehoshaphat, during a long reign, continued with perfect wisdom the system adopted by his father Asa. He extirpated the remnants of hierodulism, which his father had been unable to destroy. The Temple received every honour; and it even seems as though Jehoshaphat enlarged it and added the external court.‡ But this great centre of Iahveism did not extinguish local ritual. No high places were suppressed, but the people continued to offer sacrifices and to burn incense upon them. No religious persecution appears to have been practised. The priests and prophets interposed no obstacle to the exercise of the royal prerogative. Those who lived in the souvenirs of the past believed that a revival of the great days of Solomon had begun.§

There was one point, notably, in regard to which Jehoshaphat inaugurated a particularly excellent

* The anecdote, 2 Chronicles, ch. xvi. v. 12, perhaps comes from the name of אסא for אסיה (*quem sanat Iahveus*).

† 2 Chronicles, ch. xiv. v. 14; ch. xxi. v. 19. Compare Amos, ch. vi. v. 10, and Jeremiah, ch. xxxiv. v. 5.

‡ Ibid. ch. iv. v. 9; ch. xx. v. 5.

§ Ibid. ch. xvii. v. 1 and following.

policy, and that was in his relations with the kingdom of Israel. For nearly seventy years the two halves of the people of Jacob had waged a bitter war with each other. In the reign of Jehoshaphat, not only did these fratricidal wars cease, but the alliance between Judah and Israel was sincere and solid. The religious difference between the two countries was insignificant, their intellectual culture and interests were identical, the same language was used in them both.

CHAPTER V.

THE HOUSE OF OMRI.—SAMARIA.

WHILE the kingdom of Jerusalem was being vigorously reconstituted under the sceptre of Asa, the kingdom of Israel was writhing in anarchy. Elah, the son of Baasha, reigned only two years at Tirzah. The majority of the Israelitish army was again encamped before Gibbethon; Zimri, one of the officers left at Tirzah, killed the king at a feast, and then exterminated Baasha's family, just as Baasha had murdered all the family of Jeroboam. These royal houses, falling one upon the other, exterminated by massacres, excited the imagination of the prophets, who saw the righteous judgments of Heaven in every catastrophe. A defeat at that epoch was always a chastisement, the result of the anger of a god.*

The tribes of Israel had not, at that time, the sentiment of dynastic fidelity; and in this they resembled the Arab tribes, which have never displayed it at any epoch. Life, in circles where ambitious

* Inscription of Mesa, lines 5, 6.

ideas had any scope, was a series of treasons. Iahveism had no more power than had Islam, fifteen hundred years later, to check the prevalence of crime. Religion was no impediment to the committal of murder and abominable violence. It was simply necessary to ascertain whether any one enjoyed the favour of a god; which favour could not be obtained by justice and moderation, but by exclusive worship of the special deity.* This produced a morality very similar to that of the Mamelukes of Cairo, certainly very pious men, very conscientious Mahometans, who did not suppose that they offended Allah when they assassinated their master, or massacred some hundreds of innocent persons. The victim was always in the wrong, he was condemned by Iahveh, and no one could be considered guilty for executing a sentence of the supreme Judge. The religion of Iahveh had as yet a very feeble link with morality. It was in this respect similar to that of Chemos.

The three founders of royal houses at that time, David, Omri, and Mesa, were chiefs of dynasties, like that of the Abdul-Abbas or Ahmed-ben-Touloun of the Middle Ages, not of thrones like that of Hugh Capet or Rodolph von Hapsburg. Our good solid Western races alone knew the secret how to prepare a foundation which would withstand every shock, and give our royal houses a moral basis which lasted for ten

* Notice the passage, 1 Kings, ch. xvi. v. 19, where Zimri is killed for the crime of schism, not for the murder of his predecessor.

centuries. The throne of David owed its solidity to motives of a religious, not of a political order, for the latter only developed later on.

Zimri was proclaimed king at Tirzah. But the army before Gibbethon refused to accept this palace revolution; Omri, its chief, was proclaimed king, and at once laid siege to Tirzah. Zimri, seeing the city taken, retired to the upper storeys of the palace, set fire to it, and perished, having reigned seven days.

The people and the army divided. One half followed Omri, the other proclaimed Tibni, son of Ginath; this division lasted four years. Ultimately, Omri became sole king through the death of Tibni (towards 900 B.C.). The length of his reign is very uncertain. According to the present version of the Bible, he only reigned six years, but this is not very probable, judging by the profound impression left by his reign. According to calculations, which appear to be much more likely to be true,* Omri reigned twenty-four years. But in any case he was a real creator, a kind of David, to whom only religious prestige was wanting. His dynasty only lasted forty years, but it left an imperishable mark. In the Assyrian texts, the kingdom of Israel is always called the "land of Omri," or "the land of the house of Omri."†

* Duncker, *Gesch. des Alt.*, vol. ii. p. 182 and following (fifth edition).

† Schrader, pp. 188, 189, and following; Inscription of Mesa, line 7 and following. Compare 2 Kings, ch. viii. v. 18, 27.

Thanks to the strong organisation of his army, Omri was able to reassert his suzerainty over all the countries which, since the death of Solomon, had thrown off the yoke of Israel.* He conquered Chemos-gad, king of Moab, and reduced Moab to a state of vassalage, "for Chemosh was wroth against his land."† His greatest battles were fought against Benhadad, king of Damascus, to whom he was forced to cede some cities, particularly Ramoth-gilead, and the cities in the land of Tod, and Jair.‡ It even appears that he granted some freedom to the Damascenes in the interior of the new city he was then building, a city which soon became one of the most important in Syria.§

But the greatest service that Omri rendered to the kingdom of Israel was to give it a capital, which it had not possessed until his reign. The miserable hamlet of Tirzah could not be called by this name, although it contained a royal palace,‖ which in the popular songs was compared to Jerusalem.¶ Jezreel in its rich plain seemed destined to fill the vacant position; but Jezreel had not then the great essential for a capital, I mean an acropolis which could be fortified. Omri bought, for two talents of

* 1 Kings, ch. xvi. v. 27.

† Inscription of Mesa, commencement and lines 7, 8.

‡ 1 Kings, ch. xx. v. 1 and following. (In the English version these wars are attributed to Ahab.—Note by Translator.)

§ Ibid. v. 34. (Ibid.—Note by Translator.)

‖ Ibid. ch. xvi. v. 4, 9, 18.

¶ Song of Songs, ch. vi. v. 4.

silver, a hill situated a few miles from Shechem to the north-west, in a very advantageous military position. He called it Someron,* "The Guard," intending to make it the central point of his monarchy. And during two hundred years Someron, which, according to custom we shall call Samaria, was regarded as the Jerusalem of the North. But the North never allowed its king sufficient power to enable him to render his new city a rival to Sion. We do not know anything about his buildings, for even the traces of them have almost disappeared beneath the Roman ruins of the modern *Sebastizeh.* The reigns of Omri and his son Ahab† bear much resemblance to the reign of Solomon at Jerusalem. The tribes of the North, which had remained aloof from material civilisation, all at once showed themselves ready to welcome it. Tyre, which at that time displayed the highest development of Phœnician genius, and which by its vicinity naturally exercised the greatest influence over the kingdom of Israel, became the model to be admired and imitated. Luxury, industry, a taste for large buildings, chariots of state and of war, penetrated even to these mountains, where, until then, the agricultural and pastoral life of the ancients had prevailed. With monarchy regularly established, privileges came into existence; the first hay-harvest was reserved for the

* Perhaps the hill was already known by this name.

† There is frequent confusion between Omri and Ahab. 2 Kings, ch. viii. v. 26; compare Inscription of Mesa, lines 7–9.

royal cavalry;* fines and taxes, more or less openly claimed, assumed in the eyes of these simple people an air of unjust impositions.†

But in the official world, the same religious lukewarmness which was seen in the reign of Solomon now resulted from this development of luxury and intercourse with foreign countries. Iahveh was the nation, and the worship of Iahveh diminished when the national spirit became weakened. The Phœnician Baal was then preferred. We shall see the reaction which this declension of Iahveism produced in the religious feelings of Israel.

Omri was buried in the sepulchral caves which he had commanded to be hewn in the rocks near the city of Samaria. Ahab his son who succeeded him at the age of eighteen,‡ is the most infamous of all the kings either of Israel or Judah in the record of the Iahveist tradition.§ He is represented as the personal enemy of Iahveh; his accursed race was, to the orthodox Jewish historians, the foil destined by contrast to enhance the pure light of the house of David.‖

No doubt there was great partiality in this representation of the case. Ahab, like Solomon, only appears to have been guilty of one crime, but that,

* Amos, ch. vii. v. 1.

† Ibid. ch. ii. v. 7, 8; ch. v. v. 11, 12. Compare 1 Kings, ch. x. v. 25; Habakkuk, ch. ii. v. 5.

‡ Inscription of Mesa, line 8.

§ 1 Kings, ch. xxi. v. 25, 26.

‖ Micah, ch. vi. v. 16.

the crime of tolerance, was an unpardonable one in the eyes of the fanatics. He committed the most dangerous act which, according to the prophets of Iahveh, any Israelite could perpetrate, for he allied himself with Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians (that is, of Tyre and Sidon united), and married his daughter Izebel or Jezebel.* This marriage, it was said, led him to worship Baal, or rather the Baalim (Baal adored under different names, *Baal-Hamon*, *Baal-samaïm*, etc.). What may, no doubt, be true is that, for the use of Jezebel and her Tyrians, he raised a temple to Baal in Samaria.† Sacrifices were offered upon an altar placed in front of the temple, and this circumstance made all the more impression because it would appear that Iahveh never had a temple at Samaria.

In the same city an *asera* or *astarteïon* was raised soon afterwards. "The four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Astarte, who eat at the table of Jezebel,"‡ was surely an exaggeration. But it is easily understood that the Tyrian ritual, with its splendid organisation, excited strange wrath amongst the partisans of Iahveh. The worship of Iahveh (and this was its great beauty) had a certain rusticity which must have displeased persons of superficially religious

* Consult for this name, which appears to be a shortened form of Baalezbel (*quarum Baal cohabitavit*), the *Corpus inscr. Semit.*, 1st part, No. 158.

† 2 Kings, ch. x. v. 21 and following.

‡ 1 Kings, ch. xviii. v. 19.

tendency. It would appear that Ethbaal, Jezebel's father, had been a priest of Astarte,* and the daughter might therefore have been accompanied to Samaria by a large sacerdotal following. The Iahveists of Israel, who opposed the application of art to religion, continued to resist the idea of a temple. They cherished the fundamental principle that the altar should be erected in the open air and formed of unhewn stones.† At other times the altar was only a heap of clods of earth.‡ Sacrifice was freely offered; the animal was killed on the mound, it was burnt with the wood used as harness, and eaten in the family circle.§ This extremely simple ritual excluded the hierodules, the long lines of priests and eccentric practices, such as the tonsure, and hair curiously cut.|| The priests of Baal during their sacrifices made incisions in their flesh and cut themselves with knives and razors.¶ These customs provoked the indignation of the Iahveists, who also ridiculed the foreign priests for their custom of dancing and leaping during the sacrifices.** Already, when in Jerusalem, the Iahveists

* 1 Kings, ch. xviii. v. 26–28.

† Menander of Ephesus, in Jos., *Against Apion*, I. 18. Compare Inscription of Tabnith, *Revue Archéol.*, July to August, 1887, p. 2.

‡ Book of the Covenant; see below, p. 314. Compare 1 Kings, ch. xviii. v. 31 and following.

§ 1 Kings, ch. xviii. v. 30, 32.

|| Ibid. v. 23.

¶ Inscription of Larnaka, *Corpus inscr. Semit.*, 1st part, No. 86. A, lines 12, 15. B, line 10.

** 1 Kings, ch. xviii. v. 26–28.

of the North showed great displeasure as they passed before the temple of Iahveh. What then must have been their feelings when they saw a building erected in honour of Baal on land especially dedicated to Iahveh?

The name of Baal was not in itself derogatory to the divinity, for it simply meant "the Lord," and the families of Israel had admitted it into their own titles of the deity; but the antithesis between Baal and Iahveh increased daily. *Baal*, in the eyes of the Iahveists, became an impure word. A custom arose of replacing it in proper nouns by the word *boset*, "ignominy." The connexity between the worship of Baal and that of Iahveh, which until that date had been very frequent, became in the eyes of the pietists the worst of crimes.

This was a crime which Ahab evidently committed every day. He was not a renegade from the worship of Iahveh, but, like Gideon, Saul, and several members of the house of David, he honoured the two deities simultaneously, or at least he allowed them to be honoured around him. In his lifetime Samaria was a city of eclecticism in religious matters. Any one in it might have said more than once:

> I have my God, I serve him, you can serve your own.
> They are both powerful. . . .

This was called "halting," or rather "dancing* on both feet," belonging to Iahveh and Baal alternately.

* פסח. 1 Kings, ch. xviii. v. 21.

There were prophets of Baal and Astarte as well as prophets of Iahveh; perhaps the same prophets prophesied sometimes for Baal, sometimes for Iahveh.* An anecdote of the times, although quite void of historical value, shows us exactly the curious religious feeling then prevalent. A certain Naaman,† first minister to the king of Damascus, was led, through good or evil motives, to the conclusion that there was no other true God than the God of Israel, and this belief produced the curious idea of taking two mule burdens of earth from Israel to Damascus, in order henceforth not to offer sacrifice or burnt offering to any god but Iahveh. He was then converted to Iahveism, with, however, one condition—that Iahveh would pardon him when, in fulfilment of the duties of his office, he accompanied his master to the temple of Rimmon and made the customary prostrations with him. This singular arrangement was accepted. From that time may be said to have come into existence a religious class which later on played an important part—I mean the heathen who feared God,‡ the foreigners who, without being Iahveists in the fashion of an Israelite, nevertheless revered Iahveh and adopted his worship.

It is, therefore, a mistake to imagine that Ahab was a direct adversary to Iahveism; he was simply

* Jeremiah, ch. xxiii. v. 13. Compare Ezekiel, ch. xiii. v. 17.

† 2 Kings, ch. v.

‡ Compare the incident of the widow of Sarepta, 1 Kings, ch. xvii.

a tolerant sovereign. In the prophetic legends, Ahab is represented as a kind of maniac, furiously persecuting the followers of the true God. On the other hand, in another series of documents, he is found on good terms with the prophets of Iahveh.* It is not sufficiently remembered that Ahab, reputed to be a type of hatred against Iahveh, gave to his children the names of *Jeho-ram*, *Ahaz-iah*, *Athal-iah*,† implying the worship of Iahveh. Lastly, the most undeniable document, the Inscription of Mesa, Ahab's contemporary, represents Iahveh as the national god of the kingdom of Israel, in the same way as Chemosh is the national god of Moab.‡

In reality the discontent of the prophetic element, representing the true spirit of Israel, against the dynasty of Omri and Ahab, chiefly arose from moral causes. The old Israelitish party wished to perpetuate the customs of a simple and poor epoch in opposition to the much more civilised societies of Tyre and Damascus. The wealth of the few appeared

* 1 Kings, ch. xxii. v. 5 and following. As a rule, the twentieth and twenty-second chapters do not imply any hostility between Ahab and the Iahveists. For the two classes of documents referring to the reign of Ahab, see below, p. 234, note †.

† There are some doubts about *Athaliah.* As a woman's name it is perhaps the feminine of עתלי (Esdras, ch. x. v. 28). The form עתליהו would then be a blunder of the scribe, that is easily explained. The ה may stand for ת ; the Phœnician form would be עתלת. Compare مثليث, "Castellum Athaliæ?" The female names having the name of Iahveh in the final syllable יה are rare. יכליה, the name of the mother of Josiah, may also be a feminine adjective.

‡ Lines 17, 18.

to the partisans of this idea a robbery from the many; every social complication seemed to them an iniquity rendering the justification of Providence more obscure.* Omri, Ahab, and their companions aspired to civilisation in the complex sense which we attribute to the word. Their antipathy to the Israelitish peasant was extreme; the head of a family who obstinately clung to the land of his fathers, and would sooner allow himself to be killed than accept the new laws of dispossession for the public good, appeared to them a narrow-minded rustic.† They were men of the world, attracted by a life of profane luxury and brilliancy, no longer distinguished by the solid morality of former ages, but understanding more of the necessities of the times and the inevitable transformation of societies.

Luxury and a taste for art characterised the new dynasty, and were the most serious reproach against it in the eyes of a still rough and homely nation, which made it a point of honour to cling as closely as possible to the old ideal of the patriarchal life. Jezebel had brought with her from Tyre to Samaria head-dresses, jewels, costly *teraphim*, and probably she had been followed by skilful workmen. It cannot be positively asserted that she is the subject of a Hebrew marriage song which has been preserved to us;‡ but it was certainly with reference to the

* Consult chiefly the first chapters of Amos.

† The episode of Naboth.

‡ Psalm xlv. Notice the absence of the name of Iahveh in this poem.

entrance of a king's daughter like herself into the seraglio of Samaria that the court poet improvised the following fine *sir:*

My heart is inditing of a good matter,
I speak of the things which I have made touching the king,
My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

(*To the King.*)

Thou art fairer than the children of men,
Full of grace are thy lips,
Because God hath blessed thee for ever.

Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, *ô gibbor* most mighty—
Thy sword, thy glory, and thy majesty.

Ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness,
And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

Thine arrows are sharp!
In the heart of the king's enemies,
Whereby the people fall under thee!

Thy God enthroned thee for ever and ever.
The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.

Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity,
Therefore God, thy God, had anointed thee
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

All thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia;
Out of the ivory palaces* music hath made thee glad.
Kings' daughters are amongst thy honourable women,
At thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.

(*To the Queen.*)

Hearken, oh, daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear,
Forget also thine own people and thy father's house;
So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty,
For he is thy lord, and worship thou him.
And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift;
Even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour.

---

* Compare the *beth-has-sen* of Samaria (1 Kings, ch. xxii. v. 39, and Amos, ch. iii. v. 15).

The king's daughter is all glorious within ;
Her clothing is of wrought gold.

She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework.

The virgins, her companions, that follow her . . .
(*To the King*) shall be brought unto thee.

With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought ;
They shall enter unto the king's palace.

(*To the King.*)

Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children,
Whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.*
I will make thy name to be remembered from generation to generation ;
Therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

And thus, one hundred years later than Jerusalem, Samaria witnessed a lavish development of the profane life. The basis of the policy of the sons of Omri was peace between the two kingdoms and friendly relations, first with Asa and then with Jehoshaphat. This all promised a successful future for Israel : Samaria and Jerusalem would rival Tyre and Sidon, and civilisation was about to triumph in a country which, until then, had seen only barbarism. But the man who has a vocation is never fit for anything else. Israel was carrying within itself the religious future of the world. As soon as it was tempted to forget itself in the common life of other nations, it looked upon the reverse side of everything, and, in accents of bitter irony, proclaimed that righteousness according to the ancient rules should never be sacrificed.

* Compare above, pp. 163, 164.

CHAPTER VI.

PREPONDERANT POSITION OF THE PROPHETS IN ISRAEL. PROGRESS OF MONOTHEISM.—MOSAISM.

THE prophets, who were the preachers of these great reactionary dogmas, became more than ever the interpreters of the real sentiments of the nation. A triple armour of religious, moral, and social prejudices separated Israel from all that which other people regarded as progress. Its ideal was in the past, in a life which it considered the only one worthy of a free man, a pastoral or agricultural life without large towns, a regular army, a central power, a court or princely aristocracy, without luxury or commerce, with a simple ritual, without temple or solid altar, and without a sacerdotal caste; at the root of all this a philosophy childish in its transparency and a thoroughly contradictory theology. The first and truest basis of this theology had been the vague idea of many forces (the *elohim*), which sometimes acted as a single being (*El* or *Elohim*), and produced all the phenomena of a physical and moral order. Elohim did good to the man who pleased him, evil to the man who displeased him, usually regulating his sympathies and antipathies by considerations of merit or unworthiness, but often

giving no reason for his choice. This unconscious deism had been obliterated, at a very early epoch, by the worship of a special god named Iahveh, who became the national God of Israel. This special god was necessarily very selfish. He had personal preferences which it was difficult to explain.* Certain persons he knows by name, others he ignores.† The essential point was to be in his good graces, and he frequently reserved his favour for scoundrels who were devoted to his worship. "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy to whom I will show mercy."‡ To gain success for his people Israel, he committed and commanded horrible barbarities, destroyed whole nations, and hardened men's hearts.§ He has so great a preference for the soil of Palestine, that it was believed that by transporting this soil to a distance, sacrifices could be offered to him which he would accept as graciously as in the land of Israel itself.||

In spite of these great imperfections, inherent in his position as a national God, Iahveh necessarily assumed all the outlines of the ethnical conscience which had adopted him. Now the essential feature of this ethnical conscience was Elohism, a preference for the gods who were reputed to be righteous, governing the world like honest men. Like the primitive El Elion or Elohim, he loved good and

* Exodus, ch. xxxiii. v. 12 and following.

† Ibid. v. 12, 17.

‡ Ibid. v. 19.

§ Ibid. ch. iv. v. 21–23.

|| 2 Kings, ch. v. 17.

hated evil. The national protecting god easily became the sole Deity; for it is unseemly to have several protectors, and the adulation inherent in the worship of *dulie* knows not where to stop. When it is once proclaimed that the national God is the only true God, that other gods are nothing beside him, the announcement that he is the supreme El, who made heaven and earth, is very near. In reality, very little difference was any longer made, either in Judah or Israel, between Iahveh and Elohim: the two words had become absolutely synonymous. As a rule, the revelation of the name Iahveh was traced to Moses, but several authorities nevertheless assert that the use of this word as an expression of adoration was anterior to the deluge, and dated from the origin of humanity.* A very strong monotheism was thus formed, not only were the Elohim blended into one being, but all these Elohim, massed and absorbed into one, had one distinctive name, Iahveh. Elohim was treated as a singular,† and the words *Elohim bara* . . . were used in the same way as *Iahveh bara* . . . Supposing that at an older date the word *Elohim* or *Na-Elohim* had been construed in the plural,‡ the written texts could show no trace

* Genesis, ch. iv. v. 26.

† Compare vol. i. p. 25. Another example of Elim, used in the singular, occurs in the new inscription of the Piræus, *Revue Archéol.*, January, 1888, p. 7.

‡ Notice particularly Genesis, ch. xviii. v. 19, where a monotheist idea afterwards connected the idea of a plurality of elohim. The plurality is retained in Genesis, ch. xx. v. 13.

of this, since the distinction between the singular *bara* and the plural *bareou* did not exist in ancient orthography, in which no vowels were written.

Thus the idea that the events of this world are due to but one cause, the will of a single Being, who interferes with everything so effectually that whatever happens is executed by Him and willed by Him, gained strength. It is, no doubt, a false one, for it has never been proved that a superior Being intervenes in the mechanism of the universe. But this idea of a perpetual Providence had a moral efficacy which the capricious wishes of the heathen gods could never attain. And, moreover, superstition had infinitely less scope under this absolute monarch than with a number of minor gods. Later on, superstition again reappeared in religion with the devotion paid to the saints, who are, in a way, minor gods.

The definition of a Supreme Being, the one and only God, introduced a unity of purpose into the government of the world, of which the ancient elohim would have been incapable. In the two portions of Jacob's family, the sacred history acquired sequence and extraordinary strength. The creation of the world became its necessary preamble, and the call of Abraham was defined with absolute precision. Several precepts were attached to this important event. But the legend of Moses and Sinai was that which was magnified the most. This episode became the corner stone of religion. Already

the habit was formed of attributing to Moses all the fundamental laws, all the religious prescripts, all the theocratic dreams produced by the national genius. Monotheism definitely founded engendered the Thora. Without being actually written, these histories were preserved in long oral narratives, which still allowed free play to an inventive imagination, and afforded wide scope to the inclination which the sages of Israel always showed towards Utopias and codes supposed to be revealed.

When Iahveh wished to enter into communication with his people he generally did so through the nabis. The essence of Iahveh was always to be a God who inspired oracles. "Seek Iahveh, consult Iahveh," was the characteristic impulse of the Iahveist believer. In ancient times, the consultation was made through the enigmatical machine, which replied *urim* and *thummim*. The *urim* and *thummim* had nearly disappeared since Solomon's time. Faith in dream revelations had become weakened. The prophet had thus substituted himself for nearly all the ancient methods of deciding the future.

And herein lies the distinctive originality of Israel. The nations which surrounded it and were allied to it by the most unmistakable fraternity, Edom, Ammon, and Moab, certainly possessed their own literatures, and it is probable that towards the time of David and Mesa the most careful observer would not have remarked any appreciable superiority in the genius of Israel. On this point the Inscription

ledge,* tricks of sleight of hand or magnetic passes.† A miracle is regarded as an essential manifestation of the Divinity, but this does not prevent (a curious inconsistency) the thaumaturgic action from being accompanied by natural measures,‡ which seem to reduce it to clever magic. But in reading these shocking stories,§ we must make allowance for the tardiness of the narrative and for its being written in a curiously hyperbolical spirit. Nevertheless, it appears that miracles, with their usual accompaniment of imposture and affectation, were a necessary element in prophetism at the time of the Omrides, when good and evil seemed blended in equal proportions. Babylon and Egypt were not more exempt from these chimeras than the people of Israel. The idea of supernatural gifts being conferred upon certain men is the common error of the most advanced races as well as of the most degraded peoples of antiquity.

At the relatively modern epoch when the legend of this extraordinary movement was written a great effort was being made to centralise the prophetic gift

* Antidotes to poison, the art of improving wells by means of salts (2 Kings, ch. ii. v. 19–22).

† The child restored to life by Elisha and Elijah.

‡ 2 Kings, ch. iv. v. 38 and following. Cure of the leprosy of Naaman, 2 Kings, ch. v.; the Abana and Pharpar, 2 Kings, ch. v. v. 12; curious story in 2 Kings, ch. xiii. v. 14 and following.

§ Shocking, particularly when we remember that the thaumaturgy of Elijah and Elisha was the type of the Gospel thaumaturgy, the great blot upon early Christianity. The circumstantial narratives of miracles found in the Gospels are derived from them.

in the hands of two chiefs, of whom one was a superhuman founder, a kind of second Moses, endowed with divine power during his sojourn on earth, and reputed to have transmitted with his mantle supernatural gifts to his successor.* Nearly all that we read about Elijah and Elisha in the Books of Kings is taken from these Lives of the Prophets, stamped with a character of fanaticism, and an absolute contempt for reality,† which distinguished the theocratic school. It was all written long after the events referred to had taken place. These hundreds of prophets, either fugitives, slain, or

* 2 Kings, ch. ii.

† The portions relative to Elijah and Elisha extracted from the prophetic annals are: 1 Kings, ch. xvii., xviii., xix.; 2 Kings, ch. i. (minus the second and last phrases), ch. ii., iv., v., vi., vii., viii. (as far as v. 15), ch. ix (as far as v. 13), ch. x. (from v. 18–30), ch. xiii (v. 20, 21); 2 Chron., ch. xxi. (v. 21–15). There are, in addition to this, portions not extracted from the agada, which yet refer to Elijah: 1 Kings, ch. xxi. (Naboth); 2 Kings, ch. iii. (Mesa, Elisha); the allusion to the death of Jezebel, 2 Kings, ch. ix. (compare 1 Kings, ch. xxi. 23). The passage in ch. xiii. v. 14 and following is quite enigmatical and is taken from a different source. Notice that in the twentieth chapter, which is not from the agada, and in which the prophets are frequently referred to, Elijah is not mentioned. The same observation may be made in ch. xxii. The historiographer of the twentieth and twenty-second chapters excludes Elijah. Ahab in them is not on bad terms with the prophets. The consultation in ch. xxii. v. 5 and following is irreconcilable with the stories of Elijah. Exaggerations and impossibilities abound in these narratives. The life of Elisha is wanting in any exact topography (2 Kings, ch. v. v. 24, העפל; ch. vi., init.); here the onomastical details are vague (the king of Syria, the king of Israel); the author omits all the proper names.

hidden in the mountains and caves;* this sort of giant in whom a whole era of the prophetic genius of Israel is concentrated, manifestly savours of the legend. The story of Elijah, particularly, has little serious connection with the authentic information given by the historiography of Israel. His name, "Iah is my God," appears to sum up his past.† His father's name is not quoted. His origin is unknown, for the name of Tishbite, implying a locality named Tishbeh which never existed, is only the result of some blunder of the copyist.‡ His life, in short, appears at times only a duplicate of that of Elisha.§ There is, therefore, little historical knowledge to be gained from these grandiose fables. Elijah is, in a general sense, an ideal personification of the puritan prophet of Iahveh, in opposition to the religious

* 1 Kings, ch. xviii. v. 13; ch. xix. v. 10–14. All are killed excepting Elijah, ch. xviii. v. 22; ch. xix. v. 14 (compare 2 Kings, ch. ix. v. 7).

† Notice that the governor of the king's house, the friend of Elijah, was also named *Obadiahon.*

‡ התשבי is a redoubled variation of מתשבי. 1 Kings, ch. xvii. v. 1. See Tobias, ch. i. v. 1.

§ Compare 2 Kings, ch. ii. v. 13 and following, to 2 Kings, ch. ii. v. 8; 2 Kings, ch. viii. v. i., to 1 Kings, ch. xvii. v. 1, ch. xviii. v. 1; 2 Kings, ch. vii. v. 1 and following, to 1 Kings, ch. xviii. v. 44 and following; 2 Kings, ch. viii. v. 10, to 2 Kings, ch. i. v. 4; 2 Kings, ch. ix. v. 7 and following, to 1 Kings, ch. xxi. v. 21 and following; 2 Kings, ch. iv. v. 2 and following, to 1 Kings, ch. xvii. v. 14 and following; 2 Kings, ch. iv. v. 8 and following, to 1 Kings, ch. xvii. v. 17 and following; 2 Kings, ch. ii. v. 23 and following, to 2 Kings, ch. i. v. 10 and following.

eclecticism which Solomon had just introduced into Judah and which Ahab endeavoured to imitate in Israel.

The life of Elijah, like the life of Jesus, was particularly fertile in legends. This gloomy, unattractive biography, at once sublime and bordering on the ridiculous, at times even grotesque, as far as its great antiquity will allow the use of such a word, remains like the powerful leaven of future revolutions. Moses was only a minister of God, an accepted spokesman of the Eternal. Elijah is master of the seasons, of the dew, and of the rain.* He causes years of drought to weigh heavily upon whole countries, producing frightful famines. He lives in the desert as an ascetic, drinks from springs which never dry up, and is fed by ravens who bring him his daily food. His clothing is a wild beast's skin with the hair on, kept in its place by a leathern girdle.† His thaumaturgy is strange, and yet aims at being half reasonable; he raises the dead by stretching himself upon them and imparting to them the breath of life, as though he produced a current of induction. His presence is more formidable than beneficial. He recalls the sins of the household, and since sorrow follows sin, he brings misfortune. Tracked by the kings‡ like a wild beast, he defies them with supreme impertinence.§ His challenge to the priests of Baal

* 1 Kings, ch. xvii. v. 1 and following.

† 2 Kings, ch. i. v. 8.

‡ 1 Kings, ch. xviii. v. 7 and following.

§ 2 Kings, ch. i. v. 8.

on Carmel* is the acme of theological pride. He does not die,† but is carried to heaven in a chariot of fire, and is reserved for future fables of still greater improbability. Elijah was the basis of Jewish, Christian and Mussulman ‡ mythologies. He was the great divine agent of Messiahism, the forerunner of celestial apparitions,§ the prophet of the latter days. John the Baptist was only a reflection of him. Jesus, who bore no resemblance to him, asseverated, we are told, as a means of increasing his prestige, that he had held secret colloquies with Elijah upon invisible mountains.

And, in truth, one almost feels a premature breath of the Gospel in the account of Elijah's vision upon Horeb. Discouraged in the mission which God has entrusted to him, Elijah prays for death. The Eternal, to comfort him, places a loaf of bread and a jar of water at his service. With the strength gathered from this food he walks forty days and forty nights until he reaches the "mountain of God, Horeb." He enters a cave || where he passes the night. A voice warns him that Iahveh in his glory will pass by; he goes out to see. . . . First there is a violent tempest, which rends the mountains and breaks the rocks before Iahveh, but Iahveh is not in the tempest; after the tempest comes an

* 1 Kings, ch. xviii. v. 7 and following. † 2 Kings, ch. ii.

‡ The Arab legends of the Hodhr were concentrated round him.

§ Malachi, the last chapter.

|| Compare Exodus, ch. xxxiii. v. 22.

earthquake, but Iahveh is not in the earthquake; after the earthquake there is fire, Iahveh is not in the fire. After the fire there is a still, small voice; at this sign Elijah recognises Iahveh and veils his face with his mantle.* The last compiler of these histories had so little sentiment of the unity of his narrative that he forgot the praise lavished, a few pages before, on the frightful massacre, apparently commanded by the same prophet to whom Iahveh in this incident gives such an admirable lesson on gentleness.

But in these stories relating to Elijah had the legend no foundation to work upon? I do not think so any more than in the history of Jesus. The prophetism of Amos and Hosea, which is known to us by direct documents, is only about sixty years posterior to Elijah and Elisha, and the tone of them is as violent as that which the agadas attribute to Elijah and Elisha. Like them, Amos arrests the divine punishments.† The so-called Iahveist writer in the Hexateuch displays at times‡ a ferocity quite equal to that attributed to Elijah. Elisha is certainly an historical personage, and he was referred to in the serious annals of Israel.§ Elijah also appears to have been a real prophet, the one who intervened in the episode of Naboth, and whose anathema is reputed to have caused the ruin of the house of

* 1 Kings, ch xix. † Amos, ch. vii. v. 36.

‡ Exodus, ch. xxiii. v. 29, the theory of the extermination of the Canaanites.

§ See above, pp. 236, 237.

Ahab. He was, as it would appear, a native of the country of Gilead, and usually inhabited the deep ravines of the torrent of Crith, to the east of the Jordan.* Under Jehu, the recollection of his opposition magnified him very much, the victorious prophets regarded him as their hero, and legend chose him as the sole representative of an age in which, so it was imagined, prophetism had attained its highest development and power.† This was the time when the legend of Moses attained its colossal proportions. The giant of Sinai seems like a creation of the school of Elijah, the two legends interpenetrate each other; Elijah beholds visions in Horeb‡ which bear a marked resemblance to those revealed to Moses in the same place.

Oriental countries have always possessed these eccentric types, which are now represented by the Mussulman dervishes, who abandon themselves to every aberration of individual inspiration. In the ninth century B.C., the Nazarite sect, which abstained from fermented liquors and forbade the hair to be cut (a symbol of strength in a primitive savage life),§ already numbered many adherents.||

* Now the Wadi Adjlun.

† The first germ of the legend of Elijah must have been written in Israel before 722. A Judahite in the reign of Josiah must have found all this scandalous, particularly the altar referred to in 1 Kings, ch. xviii. Notice also 1 Kings, ch. xix. v. 10. Chronicles, an entirely hierosolymite book, omit nearly everything relating to Elijah.

‡ See above, pp. 237, 238.

§ Samson.

|| Amos, ch. ii. v. 11, 12.

Towards the time of Elijah, and in the trans-Jordan regions which appear to have been his home, an institution was founded very similar to the ascetic college of the prophets of Carmel. Just as the Middle Ages, seized by the desire to return to the primitive ideal of Christianity, created the mendicant orders, so the patriarchal exaltation of the kingdom of Israel created real monks, a religious order in every sense of the words. We have already pointed out that whenever a prospect of material civilisation opened before Israel, the conscience of this curious people reverted to a past ideal of a nomad life and of monotheism. People at last came to regard a vow to lead a wandering life as a religious virtue. A man named Jonadab, son of Rechab, apparently belonging to the Arab tribe of the Kenites,* friends of Israel, commanded his family to observe the rules of the ancient life, to dwell in tents, to abstain from cultivating the ground and from drinking wine.† The Rechabites chose as the scene for this style of existence one of the forest districts of Palestine in the direction of the Hauran. The analogy between this institution and that of Elijah leads us to inquire whether the legend of Elijah may not be of Rechabite origin. We shall presently find Jonadab filling in respect to Jehu a similar part to that of the prophets, and tending towards

* 1 Chronicles, ch. ii. v. 55.

† Jeremiah, ch. xxxv. Consult Diodorus of Sicily in a passage on the nomad Nabathans, xix. 94.

of Mesa is a conclusive monument. Mesa and David, although separated by an interval of more than a century, have absolutely the same intellectual limits, the same religious ideas, the same turns of language and imagination. The canticles, proverbs and histories of Moab and Edom must have differed very little from those of Israel about 900 B.C. The distinctive character of Israel commences with the prophets. The Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites had certainly nabi sorcerers, like the first nabis of Israel.* But this germ proved barren with them. No literature, religion, or radical revolution issued from the non-Israelite nabis. But in Israel, on the contrary, the nabis acquired great moral influence at an early date. A struggle took place between them and the kings, and we shall see that they won the victory. It is through prophecy that Israel occupies a place in the history of the world. The creation of a pure religion was the work of inspired laymen, not of the priests. The *cohanim* of Jerusalem and Bethel were not in any way superior to those of the rest of the world, but it frequently happened that they were the means of retarding and thwarting the essential mission of Israel.

This extraordinary development of prophetism, which is, as it were, the main trunk of the religious history of the world, took place chiefly in the kingdom of Samaria under the dynasty of Ahab, who in seeking to lead Israel away in the direction

* See the incident of Balaam.

of profane civilisation, only further excited the idealism of the people. The absence of a temple or legitimate dynasty gave free scope to individual inspiration. At Jerusalem, the throne of David was surrounded by so much prestige that the religious conscience of the nation was dazzled by it, just as the memory of St. Louis, particularly after his canonisation, gave to the royal house of France extraordinary strength against sacerdotal pretensions. The religious importance of David's name increased daily. His descendants could take measures against the men of God which, in Israel, would have been considered impious. A legitimate king is able to exercise a religious control over the clergy which would prove disastrous to republicans and liberals.

The dynasty of Samaria had not this religious character, and was, therefore, easily undermined by the messengers of God. It seemed like a return to the last years of the Judges, before the monarchy had partly monopolised, partly extinguished the gift of free inspiration. The characteristic phenomena of the prophetism which destroyed Saul, and which David silenced, reappeared with more strength than ever. The schools of the prophets, colleges where fanaticism exalted itself by the contact of a few sincere zealots with passionate and untutored masses, covered all the districts of Carmel with their impetuous members. This is one of the endemic vices of Semitic or Semitised countries. In the present day, the greatest obstacle which French

civilisation has encountered in Algiers is the same as that which defied the house of Ahab, viz. the *Khouans*, who have so great an analogy with the schools of the prophets, these troops of wandering marabouts, who claim, on the score of religious alms-seeking, exemption from that regular work which, as a rule, the inhabitants of these lands abhor. It cannot, in short, be denied that idleness was one of the chief agents in this obstinate preference for the ancient life and the opposition shown to the Tyrian customs. Every effort was made to maintain the holiness of a social order in which man was considered ennobled by the faculty of doing nothing.

In fine, two things constituted the essence of prophetism in the north at this remote epoch : first, the pronounced taste for the patriarchal life, joined to an antipathy for wealth and civilisation ; secondly, an ardent Iahveism, an absolute theocracy, a frantic proclamation of the principle that man has only one master, who is God. These doctrines, we repeat, could not have developed easily in Jerusalem, where the heir of David held in check the too daring manifestations of individual enthusiasm. On the other hand, everything was possible in the north, which had no holy dynasty. Military chiefs, leaders in *coups d'état* and palace conspiracies, left the field open to the men of God. Under Jeroboam I., who was imbued with strong antipathy to the ideas of Solomon, and whose power was never a clearly defined monarchy, the opposition of the prophets

was not much felt. But this was all changed after Omri had formed, at Samaria, the centre of a strong power, organised in military fashion. Ahab and Jezebel caused the popular hatred to overflow. Their luxury, their heathen customs, their hesitation between Baal and Iahveh provoked, in the kingdom of Israel, a reactionary movement which swept away the dynasty and with it every hope of a prosperous future.

CHAPTER VII.

ELIJAH AND ELISHA.

As I have already said, Baal and Astarte had their prophets as well as Iahveh. The temples of Egypt and Phœnicia were surrounded by troops of *gerim*, or "neighbours" of the god, for whom the latter naturally reserved all he had to say. These false gods never seem to have uttered anything to their familiars which was worthy of remembrance. In this respect Iahveh was unquestionably superior. Those whom he honoured with his instructions were not connected with the service of the sacrifices. It was far from the temples, in the hollows of the valleys and the caverns of the mountains, that the most true, most just, and most democratic God of that period inspired the profound sentiments, swelling hearts and violent indignation which have counted among the vital pulsations of the heart of humanity.

The outward appearance of the schools of the prophets in Ahab's time strongly resembled the same schools which had existed two hundred years

before, about the time of Samuel, but the extent of the phenomena was very much greater at the later date. The number of the prophets of Israel amounted to four hundred.* The expression *hitnabbé* ("maketh himself a prophet") became more and more synonymous with a state of madness.† The good sense of the laity affected to confuse these enthusiasts with madmen,‡ and in fact the difference was very slight. Companies of these enthusiasts infested the country, differing little from the monks in the neighbourhood of Antioch, who were seen twelve or thirteen hundred years later, wandering "like elephants" through the north of Syria, trying to destroy the Græco-Roman civilisation. These prophets were zealous Iahveists before everything else, and inveterate opponents of the worship of Baal. But it was not merely a word which excited them to so much wrath. Their real grievance was the introduction of Tyrian civilisation, which an imprudent government aspired to establish, without sufficient precautions, in a country which had up till then been rustic and pastoral.

The principal source of strength among the Iahveist prophets was found in their organisation as a corporation, with adepts and novices, who were called "sons of the prophets."§ Although married,

* 1 Kings, ch. xxii. v. 6, very ancient and reliable passage.

† 2 Kings, ch. ix. v. 11; Jeremiah, ch. xxix. v. 26.

‡ Hosea, ch. ix. v. 7; consult Gesenius at the word התנבא.

§ 2 Kings, ch. ii. v. 7, 15, and following; ch. iv. v. 38; ch. v. v. 22; ch. vi. v. i.

they* lived in cells,† took their meals together and assembled in rooms for their exercises in common, and above all to listen to their master.‡ The chief made visits of inspection from one place to another,§ and the affiliated members divided into small wandering bands, analogous to the pious expeditions made by the primitive Franciscans with the object of edifying the populations by their holy exterior. They were often confused with the *nazirs.*‖ Mount Carmel¶ and the plain of Jezreel, almost within sight of Tyre, were the centres of the movement; the land of Gilead, the banks of the Jordan, and the neighbourhood of Gilgal (in Ephraim)** appear also to have been the scenes of these strange manifestations.

Inspiration among the prophets of Israel, as among the prophets of the time of Samuel, was excited by external means, such as dances and orgiastic proceedings resembling those of the dervishes. Music, particularly that of stringed instruments,†† is represented as a necessary accompaniment of the ecstasy, so much so, that the prophet himself asked for a

* 2 Kings, ch. iv. v. 1.

† *Navoth,* see vol. i. p. 305 and following.

‡ 2 Kings, ch. iv. v. 1 and following.

§ Ibid. v. 38 and following.

‖ Amos, ch. ii. v. 11, 12.

¶ Not the promontory, which was always a centre of heathen worship. Phœnician inscription, *Arch. des Miss. Scient.,* third series, vol. xi. p. 173, and plate I. 1 (Clermont-Ganneau).

** 2 Kings, ch. ii. v. 1 and following. See above, pp. 160, 161.

†† Ibid. ch. iii. v. 15.

harpist, "that the hand of Iahveh may touch him." The outpourings of the seer were no longer worded in the fine parabolic style of Balaam, and had not yet attained the grand sonorous rhetoric of the prophets of the eighth century. Although writing was already very generally used, the prophets in the time of the Omrides did not write. Speech even seemed to them an insufficient medium for the expression of their thoughts, and they frequently resorted to symbolic language, or striking facts, which the eye could not fail to see.* Sometimes they did not scruple to display those show-boards or eccentric means of attracting attention which were the original predecessors of our show-bills and startling advertisements.

The ancient seer was hardly a miracle worker. He uttered awful curses and wove spells. The thaumaturgy of the prophets of the time of Isaiah was of equally little account, but at the time we are speaking of, on the contrary, the men of God were far more effective miracle workers, powerful *vékils* from heaven, than they were prophets in the ordinary sense of the word. They were supposed to be endowed with absolute power over Nature.† They used recipes and processes which leave us in doubt whether the basis of their power consisted in the supernatural or in secret know-

* "Strike me," and the curious narrative, 2 Kings, ch. xiii. v. 14–20.

† 2 Kings, ch. v. v. 8.

the purest monotheism. The *nazirs* and the *nabis* from that time got to be classed in the same category and were often associated.*

A true religious spirit, though still rough and poisoned by gloomy fanaticism, animated these formidable champions who ultimately secured the victory of Iahveh. The prophets of the new school were infinitely superior to the ancient sorcerer who, as owner of his prophetic faculty, used it for his own profit, and could only be consulted money in hand. The prophets never received any recompense for the miraculous services they rendered, nor were their servants allowed to accept anything.† The opposition which they maintained against the impure Phœnician ritual was based upon serious moral objections. It is touching to find them defending the weak and personally protesting to the king himself‡ against the murder of a poor man. Iahveh, in the opinion of these ardent sectarians, was still essentially a local God. He cared only for Palestine,§ he had a name, he was one person and not another. The savage egotism of an exclusive nationality which confiscated the Divinity for its own advantage is certainly far from the ideal of religious truth. But poor humanity is so constituted that it can only obtain good at the price of evil, only reach truth by

* Amos, ch. ii. v. 12. *Nazir* is used as a parallelism with *nabi.*

† Elisha and Naaman, fate of Gehazi, 2 Kings, ch. iv. and v.

‡ 1 Kings, ch. xxi. v. 17 and following (*bonæ notæ*).

§ Episode of Naaman.

passing through error. Who can now unreservedly accept the inheritance bequeathed by Calvin, Henry VIII., or John of Leyden? And yet the Protestantism of the sixteenth century certainly marks a decisive step in religious progress.

CHAPTER VIII.

REIGNS OF AHAB AND JEHOSHAPHAT.

We possess no authentic details respecting the struggle that took place between the dynasty of Omri and the prophetic schools.* Legend has greatly exaggerated both the extent of the persecutions and the fanaticism of the resistance, at all events in the reign of Ahab. There is no doubt, at the same time, that the men of God waged ardent war against Ahab and Jezebel. When we find a pious man like Asa obliged to deal rigorously with the prophets, we cannot feel astonished that the son of Omri found it necessary to resort to measures against these powerful corporations who defended the ancient customs. Royalty was in many respects exacting, and the prophets, considering these exactions exorbitant, urged as against reasons of state a primitive individualism, immovable on the subject

* The prophetic agada in the Books of Kings are marked by great exaggeration. It is remarkable, however, that Micah (ch. vi. v. 16), about 725, alludes to the Omrides as the founders of idolatry in Israel. Public opinion was therefore formed on that point before the destruction of the kingdom of Samaria.

of personal rights. They thus rendered all progress impossible, and forced the authorities to unpopular measures. These are the tactics of all clerical parties; they drive the civil authorities to extremities, and then represent the acts of oppression which they have rendered inevitable as deeds of atrocious violence. The artless anarchism of the Arabs cannot distinguish between the necessities of the State and the egotism of the sovereign.* An act of expropriation for purposes of public utility appears to them a robbery. It is related that a certain Naboth of Jezreel, who refused, through love of his patriarchal inheritance, to give up his field for the enlargement of the royal gardens, perished the victim of odious intrigues. Subsequent records related the terrible threats which the prophet Elijah had uttered against Ahab and Jezebel† on this account, and as a matter of course the foreigner bore a larger share than her husband of the unpopularity created by the denunciations of the prophets of Iahveh.

And yet, without aspiring to any position beyond its powers, this dynasty of Samaria held a very prominent and honourable place in the Syrian world; the country of Moab paid tribute to it and was firmly held in subjection.‡ The Ammonites also

* See Samuel's speech against a monarchy.

† 1 Kings, ch. xxi. This chapter does not belong to the prophetic annals. It has a certain historical precision (v. 22; compare 1 Kings, ch. xiv. v. 7; ch. xvi. v. 4).

‡ 2 Kings, ch. viii. v. 18. Inscription of Mesa, lines 8, 9. Consult *Jour. des Sav.*, March, 1887.

seem to have obeyed it.* The marriage between Ahab and Jezebel brought it into relations with the reigning family of Tyre. For quite a century the kingdom of Damascus had attained great importance, and Damascus was a centre of very brilliant industrial civilisation. "The good things of Damascus" were proverbial.† From that time the word "damask" has been used to designate rich damascened materials.‡ Rezon, Tabrimmon, and Benhadad I. had only bent before David for a moment. War between Damascus and Israel had been almost perpetual, and the division between the two Israelitish kingdoms had been singularly favourable to the arms of the Damascenes. Benhadad II.§ invaded the kingdom of the North with one of the strongest armies that had been seen in those countries at that time. He had thirty-two kings in his army, and a formidable force of cavalry. Benhadad marched victoriously through Samaria, Ahab parleying with him and at first submitting to rather severe conditions. The prophets then interfered, and a vigorous attack from the people of Samaria decided the fate of the first campaign.

Benhadad retired, fully determined to return and to continue the struggle, not in the mountainous regions of Samaria, where his cavalry could not act, but in the plains of Jezreel. "Their gods are the

* Duncker, *Gesch. des Alt.*, p. 186.

† כל טוב דמשק. 2 Kings, ch. viii. v. 9.

‡ Amos, ch. iii. v. 12.

§ His real name may have been Hadadezer (Schrader, p. 201), by the law of atavism of proper names.

gods of mountains," said his officers to him; "and that is the reason they have defeated us. Let us attack them in the plains and we shall certainly conquer them." He also received much more sensible advice to replace his thirty-six kings by an equal number of *pahot* or functionaries under his orders, that is to say, to strengthen his military organisation, much as we have seen the German empire doing in our own time.

A year later, Benhadad made a second advance with his Arameans, and took up his position in Aphek, near Jezreel,* where Ahab resided. The extensive plains in this locality were favourable to the Arameans, and the Israelites hesitated very much. The prophets of Iahveh maintained that he was a God of the plains as well as a God of the mountains, and urged them to go up to battle. Ahab, more prudent, treated with the invader on the basis of the *statu quo ante bellum*. Benhadad II. restored the places which his father had taken from Omri, and gave free quarters to the Samaritans in Damascus, just as the Damascenes had in Samaria. The prophets, or rather the affiliated members of this dangerous community, were displeased, and intimated to the king, by various symbolic actions, that he had been wrong not to exterminate the Syrians.†

* The identity of the two Aphecks is doubted. 1 Samuel, ch. xxix. v. 1, and 1 Kings, ch. xx. v. 26, 30. The circumstance alleged by the prophets inclines me to think that the Aphek here referred to was situate in the plain of Jezreel. It was the usual field of battle between the Israelites and Damascenes. 2 Kings, ch. xiii. v. 17.

† 1 Kings, ch. xx. v. 35–43, ancient.

At Jerusalem, Jehoshaphat was on the best terms with the men of God, and he had, at the same time, the good sense to live peaceably with the king of Samaria. The alliance between the two kings was cemented by the marriage of Athaliah, daughter of Omri, with Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat.* Three years had passed since Benhadad's second campaign.† It appears that the latter had not fulfilled his promise concerning the restoration of the cities of Gilead.‡

* 2 Kings, ch. viii. v. 18, 26; 2 Chronicles, ch. xxii. v. 2. See below, p. 258, note.

† 1 Kings, ch. xxii., ancient. Jehoshaphat and Ahab profess therein the same religion. In this chapter Ahab is on fairly good terms with the prophets of Iahveh; Elijah is not mentioned in it. Notice the דרש יהוה as in the ancient times. In this chapter an extract from the life of Jehoshaphat by Jehu, son of Hanani, 2 Chronicles, ch. xx. v. 34, can be recognised.

‡ It is here, according to M. Schrader and most of the Assyriologists, that must be placed the battle of Karkar, fought in 854, according to Assyrian chronology, by Shalmaneser II., against a league of Syrian kings, amongst whom are mentioned Benhadad and Ahab. Schrader, *Keilinschr. und Gesch.*, p. 356 and following, *Keilinschr. und das A. T.*, p. 193 and following. I think, like Wellhausen, that it is very difficult to accept the fact of an alliance between Benhadad and the king of Israel at this date. Palestine was not conquered by Assyria until a hundred years later. Moreover, it is impossible that a fact so important as the expedition of Shalmaneser II. should have failed to leave some trace in the annals of Israel, abridged though they may be. These Assyrian lists may, like the Egyptian lists of the Syrian campaigns, be false bulletins composed *à priori* where the names of cities have been taken to represent the vanquished. It is remarkable that none of the most ancient prophets allude to Assur; though as soon as Assur really appeared in the affairs of Syria, the effect is at once seen in the prophets. It is quite easy to class the prophets as anterior or posterior to the entrance of the Assyrians upon the field (about 750 B.C.).

Jehoshaphat went to visit the king of Israel at Samaria, and they resolved to march against Benhadad together, the object of the campaign being to regain possession of Ramoth-gilead. Absolute religious community existed between the two kings. Ahab assembled his prophets, four hundred in number, and asked them if they should march against Ramoth-gilead. They replied in the affirmative, but Jehoshaphat still doubted; and then occurred a most curious scene, of which a striking picture has been preserved to us:*

And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of Iahveh, of whom we could enquire? There is yet one man, replied the king of Israel, Micaiah son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of Iahveh: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. Then the king of Israel called an eunuch, and said, Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah. Now the king of Israel and the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made him horns of iron: and he came forward and said, Thus saith the Lord, with these [pointing to the horns] shalt thou crush the Arameans until thou hast destroyed them. And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, for Iahveh shall deliver it into the king's hand. And the messenger who had come to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good.

But Micaiah said, As Iahveh liveth, that Iahveh saith unto me, that will I speak.

And when he came unto the king, the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear?

Micaiah replied [ironically repeating the words of the other

---

* 1 Kings, ch. xxii. v. 7 and following.

prophets], Go up and prosper: the Eternal shall deliver it into the hand of the king.

And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of Iahveh?

And Micaiah [then returning to the serious aspect of his rôle] said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd. . . .

Did I not tell thee, said Ahab, that he would prophesy no good concerning me?

Micaiah resumed [in a still louder tone], Hear thou therefore the word of Iahveh: I saw Iahveh sitting on his throne and all the host of heaven standing* by him on his right hand and on his left. And Iahveh said, Who will deceive Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And then the spirit† came forth [from the ranks], and stood before Iahveh, and said, I will deceive him. And Iahveh said unto him, Wherewith? And the spirit replied, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And Iahveh said, Go forth and do so. Now therefore, behold, Iahveh hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, for he hath spoken evil concerning thee.

But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of Iahveh from me to speak unto thee?

And Micaiah said, Behold thou shalt see in that day when thou shalt go from chamber to chamber to hide thyself.‡

And Ahab commanded that Micaiah should be seized and carried to Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son, with this order, Put this man in prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace.

And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, Iahveh hath not spoken by me.§

---

* צבא השמים.

† The Spirit (Holy), source of the inspiration of the prophets.

‡ No doubt the original document contained the anecdote in which this prophecy was fulfilled.

§ The end of the twenty-eighth verse in the Hebrew has been added to connect the incident with Micah, ch. i. v. 2, and so identify the two prophets bearing this name.

Ahab and Jehoshaphat marched against Ramoth-gilead together. Benhadad had a particular grudge against Ahab, and commanded the thirty-two captains of his chariots to direct all their attacks against him. Ahab disguised himself before going up to battle, and Jehoshaphat nearly perished through being mistaken for him. Both kings displayed the greatest courage, but in the hottest moment of the fight Ahab was smitten by an arrow between the joints of his armour; but he still remained standing in his chariot fighting the Arameans.* Towards sunset the Israelites faltered, and the cry,

Is el iro
Is el arso

("Every man to his city, and every man to his own country"), rang out through the army. Ahab died in the evening, and the bottom of his chariot was found full of blood. His body was brought back to Samaria.† He had reigned twenty-two years, and was then only forty years old.‡ Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem almost alone. The prophets found means of proving that the expedition had been undertaken against their advice, and the danger of disobeying them was thus established by a new and terrible lesson.

* This heroic fashion of going into battle in a chariot can be imagined from the examples which the Homeric poems and Greek archæology have made familiar to us.

† The verses which follow verse 38 were added to prove that the prophecy of Elijah was actually accomplished.

‡ Inscription of Mesa, line 8. See below, p. 253.

Ahab, so much calumniated by the Iahveist historians, was, on the whole, a remarkable sovereign, brave, intelligent, moderate, devoted to civilised ideas. He equalled Solomon in the largeness of his mind and the justice of his general opinions. He built several towns, developed Samaria, embellished the palace commenced by his father, and constructed the dwelling called the *Beth-has-seu*,* "the ivory house," because of the profuse use made in it of that precious material, which the Phœnicians excelled in working. Jezreel owed its great development to him, and it became the second capital of Israel. Poetry also appears to have thrown some brilliancy over his reign.†

Ahab was succeeded by his son Ahaziah, or Ochozias, who, governed by his mother Jezebel, practised the same eclecticism as his father, adoring Iahveh, but showing tolerance for Baal. Ahab's ill-starred expedition to regain possession of Ramoth-gilead was followed by a great decline in Israel's strength, of which Moab took advantage to throw off the suzerainty of Israel, and to free himself from the tribute of sheep and rams which he annually paid.‡

Moab was then ruled by a sovereign of remarkable

* 1 Kings, ch. xxii. v 39. It may be doubted whether the house of ivory was at Samaria or Jezreel. Compare Amos, ch. iii. v. 15; Psalm xlv. v. 9; Canticles, ch. vii. v. 5. Compare Odyssey IV. 72 and above, p. 218.

† Psalm xlv. See above, p. 218.

‡ 2 Kings, ch. i. v. 1; ch. iii. v. 4; Mesa, line 8. See below.

capacity—Mesa, son of Chemoshgad,* a kind of David, who restored to Moab its former territories by conquering, one by one, from the Gaddites all the cities to the north of the Arnon.† He himself erected a monument to his victories in his city of Daibon, which has been preserved to us.‡ The following is a translation of this, certainly the most ancient authentic document which we possess relating to history about 875 B.C.: §

I am Mesa, son of Chemoshgad, king of Moab, the Daibonite. My father reigned over Moab thirty years, and I have reigned after my father, and I have built this *bâmat* to Chemosh in Qarha ‖ in remembrance of my deliverance ;¶ for he has delivered me from the hand of the aggressors and has enabled me to look with scorn upon mine enemies.

Omri was king of Israel, and he oppressed Moab during many days, because Chemosh was wroth with his land. And his son succeeded him, and he said also, "I will oppress Moab during all

---

* The first compound of this name is alone certain.

† Inscription of Mesa. See below. The Reubenites were almost fused with the Moabites at that epoch.

‡ The date of the Inscription of Mesa seems to be between the death of Ahab (897, received chronology), and the campaign of Jehoram of Israel and Jehoshaphat (about 895, received chronology). It probably dates from the reign of Ochozias of Israel. It is needless to recall the fact that the received chronology for this epoch appears to require a good deal of correction.

§ Clermont-Ganneau. *La stèle de Dhiban* (Paris, 1870). Consult *Catal. des Monum. de la Palest.*, in the Louvre Museum (Paris, 1876). The last edition is by MM. Smend and Socin (Fribourg en Brisgau, 1886). In an article in the *Journal des Savants*, March, 1887, several so-called corrections of the scientists have been rectified.

‖ Citadel of Daibon.

¶ Play upon words : Mesa meant "deliverance."

my days, I will rule over him and humble him, he and his house." And now Israel is ruined, ruined for ever. And Omri had taken possession of the land of Me-deba, and he dwelt there [he and his son, and] his son lived forty years, and Chemosh has made him perish in my time.* Then I built Baal-Meon and in it I made pools, and I constructed Qiriathaim. And the men of Gad dwelt in the land of Ataroth from time immemorial, and the king of Israel had built Ataroth for himself. I attacked the city, and I took it, and I killed all the people of the city, before Chemosh and in Moab, and I carried off the Ark of David† and dragged it on the earth, before the face of Chemosh at Qerioth, and I transported there the men of Sharon and the men of Meharouth.

And Chemosh said unto me, "Go forth, and take Nebo from Israel." And I went by night, and I fought against the city from the rising of the sun until noon, and I took it; and I killed all the people, seven thousand men and children, and the free women and the young girls and the slaves, whom I consecrated to Astar-Chemosh,‡ and I carried away from there the vases of Iahveh and I dragged them on the earth before Chemosh.

And the king of Israel had built Jahas, and he dwelt there after his war against me. And Chemosh drove him from the city before my face. I took from Moab two hundred men in all, I made them go up to Jahas, and I took it to add it to Daibon. It is I who built Qarha, the wall of the forests and the wall of the hill. I built its gates and I built its towers. I built the king's palace, and I constructed the reservoirs of water inside the city.

And there was no cistern inside the city in Qarha, and I said to all the people, "Make you every man a cistern in his house," and I dug the aqueducts of water for Qarha with the captives of Israel.

It is I who constructed Aroër, and who made the road of the Arnon. It is I who constructed Beth-Bamoth, which was destroyed. It is I who constructed Bosor, which was in ruins. . . Daibon . . . fifty, for all Daibon is subject to me. And I reached the number of one hundred with the cities which I have added to the land [of Moab]. It is I who built Beth-Diblatthaim,

---

* This refers to the battle of Ramoth-gilead.

† An enigma. Compare 2 Samuel, ch. xxiii. v. 20.

‡ For the hierodulic service, or sacred prostitution.

Nain, and Beth-Baal-Meon, and there I raised the . . . . the land El Horonaim, where dwelt. . . . And Chemosh said unto me, "Descend and fight against Horonaim." . . Chemosh in my days, the year. . . .

The remainder of this incomparable document is lost in the night of time.

Ahaziah of Israel died through an accident after reigning a little more than a year. He fell from a window in his palace, but lingered for some time afterwards. It is said that he sent messengers to consult the oracles of Beelzebub in the Philistine city of Ekron, and that by so doing he deeply wounded the patriotism of the Israelites. "Is it because there is no God in Israel to consult?" murmured the prophets, and the death of the young king of Israel was naturally regarded as the vengeance of Iahveh.* Ahaziah had no sons, and he was therefore succeeded by his brother Jehoram or Joram, who persevered in the policy adopted by his father and mother for twelve years. He certainly destroyed one pillar to Baal (*massébat hab Baal*),† which his father had erected. But he did not satisfy the puritans, and the opposition of the prophetic body to the monarchy was stronger than ever.

Yet Jehoram of Israel showed no lack of energy. His first enterprise was to stop the ever-growing

* 2 Kings, ch. i. Later on, Elijah was brought into these incidents by an awkward interpolation.

† Compare the נצב מלכבעל of the Phœnicians. *Corpus inscr. Semit.*, 1st part, 8, 123, 123 *bis*, 147, 194, 195, 380; *Journal Asiat.*, August–September, 1876, pp. 253–270 (Berger).

power of Mesa, king of Moab. With this object, he entered into an alliance with Jehoshaphat, who once more displayed his usual largeness of mind. The combined army of the two kings took the field, to the south of the Dead Sea. They were accompanied by the king of Edom, who appears to have been recently invested with the royal office by Jehoshaphat.* Until then Edom had been governed by a simple prefect or *nissab*, subject to Jerusalem.

The prophet Elisha, son of Saphat, of Abel-Mehola, in Issachar,† who was said to have been Elijah's disciple and was regarded as his successor, accompanied the army. If we believe the legendary and yet not wholly fabulous accounts‡ which we have of this incident, the prophet of Israel, whilst full of consideration for Jehoshaphat, was inclined to treat Jehoram with the utmost harshness.§ The tone of this narrative has been falsified by the prejudices of a later age and by the desire to introduce another example of the materialistic, unpolished thaumaturgy of Elisha. But it is easy to perceive

* Compare 1 Kings, ch. xxii. v. 48, to 2 Kings, ch. iii.

† Abel-Mehola, situated near Beth-San, is almost opposite to the Cerith, in the region where Elijah exercised his activity. See above, p. 239.

‡ 2 Kings, ch. iii.

§ The contemptuous manner in which he tells Jehoram "to go and consult the prophets of his father and mother" could not be truly represented. The prophets of Ahab were certainly prophets of Iahveh (1 Kings, ch. xx. v. 13; ch. xxii. v. 5 and following). Our account dates from a time when Ahab and Jezebel were supposed to have been fanatically devoted to the worship of Baal.

that the antipathy of the prophets of Iahveh against the house of Ahab was increasing daily, and that Jerusalem would ultimately become the centre of militant Iahveism.

The Moabites displayed great courage in their resistance to the aggression of the three kings, and assembled in large numbers on the frontier, in the wadis to the south of the Dead Sea. They trusted that disunion would spring up between the allies, and that the three kings would destroy one another. But they were disappointed. The allied army marched victoriously through the interior of the country, scattering stones over the cultivated fields, stopping up the wells and cutting down the fruit trees.* The combined forces thus reached Kir-Haraseth or Kir-Moab,† the military capital of the country, which was defended by formidable ramparts. The slingers had already commenced to throw their stones into the city. Mesa, who had retired into the fortress, realised that the attack was too strong for him to resist successfully, and he endeavoured to force his way out through the camp of the Edomites, with a company of seven hundred men, but the attempt failed. Mesa, prompted by despair, then adopted a last resource, suggested by the religious customs of the nation. Smoke was one day noticed rising above the wall of Kir-Haraseth, where a solemn holocaust was being

* Compare Deuteronomy, ch. xx. v. 19, 20.

† Now Kerak.

offered to Chemosh, the victim being Mesa's eldest son, the presumptive heir to his throne. The Israelites, although they never offered human sacrifices themselves, yet had the fullest faith in their efficacy. This burnt offering filled them with terror, and a few accidents that happened in their own camp were regarded as signs of divine anger.* They hastily raised the siege and returned to their own country.

A short time afterwards Jehoshaphat died, and was laid with his ancestors in the sepulchral caves of the City of David. He was a good sovereign, brave, and, as a rule, fortunate in war.† Abandoning the chimerical hope of reconquering the kingdom of the North, he judiciously applied himself to upholding the suzerainty of Jerusalem over Edom and the countries to the south. The kingdom of Israel included, as dependencies, all the Nigeb and the Wadi Arabah, as far as Ezion-geber and the Red Sea, and it was probably the possession of this coast that inspired Jehoshaphat with the idea of carrying out Solomon's plans for the navigation of the seas of India. He caused a fleet to be prepared in Ezion-geber, intending it to make a voyage to Ophir. Ahaziah of Israel asked that his subjects should be allowed to join those of Jehoshaphat on

* The writer's embarrassment is evident here. (2 Kings, iii. 27).

† 1 Kings, ch. xxii. v. 46. Chapter xvii. in 2 Chronicles is a mixture of truth and falsehood. The Ammonite, Moabite, and Seirite invasion spoken of in 2 Chronicles, ch. xx., is very doubtful.

board the vessels, but Jehoshaphat refused.* However, the enterprise produced no results, for the ships broke to pieces at Ezion-geber. It is related that a prophet, Eliezer, the son of Dodavah, rejoiced over this accident, which he represented as a result of Jehoshaphat's culpable alliance with the kings of Israel.† This prophet had a clearer insight into the future if he saw that the development of wealth which foreign commerce was sure to produce, would interfere with the great enthusiasm for the claims of the poor which has given the voice of the Hebrew people an authority unequalled among other nations.

Jehoshaphat was succeeded by his son Jehoram, and thus, for five or six years, the two kingdoms were ruled by sovereigns bearing the same name. Jehoram of Judah, as we have already said, had married Athaliah, the daughter of Omri,‡ a princess deeply imbued

* This story is quite reversed in 2 Chronicles, ch. xx. v. 35 and following.

† 2 Chronicles, ch. xx. v. 37.

‡ Athaliah is called the daughter of Ahab in 2 Kings, ch. viii. v. 18, and the daughter of Omri in 2 Kings, ch. viii. v. 26. The second passage is the *locus classicus*, the one received. Compare 2 Chronicles, ch. xxii. v. 2. Athaliah was between forty and forty-two years old when she made her *coup d'état* in 884, according to the received chronology (this is taken from 2 Kings, ch. viii. v. 26). She was therefore born between 926 and 924. At that date Omri was still only partial king of Israel. The Inscription of Mesa appears to say that Ahab was forty years old when he died (in 897); he was, according to that, born in 937, and could not have been Athaliah's father. In any case Athaliah could not be a daughter of Jezebel, as Ahab married Jezebel after his accession to the throne (1 Kings, ch. xvi. v. 31) in 918. It is

with the ideas of her own family in questions of religion and civilisation. The influence of this haughty and ambitious woman caused Jehoram to abandon the policy adopted by his father and grandfather. He reigned at Jerusalem in accordance with the maxims of Ahab, which were also followed by his namesake at Samaria and Jehoram of Israel. During his reign the Edomites threw off the yoke of Judah and chose themselves a king.* Jehoram's campaign against them was unsuccessful. Finding himself surrounded by the enemy, he succeeded in escaping by night; but Edom had reconquered her independence, and the kings of Judah were unable to wrest it from her again.† Judah also lost the Canaanite city of Libnah, near the land of the Philistines, at the same time. And there were, moreover, during this reign, several invasions by the Philistines and the Arabs, but the importance of these attacks appears to be greatly exaggerated.‡

Jehoram of Judah reigned very few years, and left the throne of Jerusalem to his son Ahaziah, aged twenty-two years. This reign was even shorter than that of Jehoram. Athaliah appears to have directed

much more probable that Athaliah was Omri's daughter, and this would explain her ascendency, and even her marriage. According to any hypothesis (the dates in the text being once accepted), Athaliah was four or five years older than Jehoram of Judah (2 Kings, ch. viii. v. 17). Perhaps the age mentioned, thirty-two, at which Jehoram ascended the throne is understated.

* 2 Kings, ch. viii. v. 20.

† Joel, ch. iv. v. 19; Amos, ch. i. v. 11, 12.

‡ 2 Chronicles, ch. xxi. v. 16, 17.

the government. Ahaziah of Judah entered into an alliance with Jehoram of Israel against Hazael, king of Damascus. The reconquest of Ramoth-gilead was always the object of these expeditions, inspired by a natural but impolitic desire for revenge. The monarch of Damascus had the advantage of reigning over a much richer country than Palestine, and his kingdom was also undisturbed by religious fanaticism. The eastern side of the territory occupied by the tribe of Manasseh included some districts which had always belonged to the sovereigns of Damascus. Benhadad II. had been replaced by his prime minister Hazael, who was suspected of having stifled his master under a damp cloth.* This Hazael appears to have been a man of great capacity, and he maintained perpetual war against Israel.† The expedition of the two Israelitish kings against Ramoth-gilead was an ill-starred one. Jehoram of Israel was wounded, and retired to Jezreel to be healed. Ahaziah of Judah went to visit him there, and thus the camp before Ramoth-gilead was for a time almost abandoned. This imprudence entailed the most serious consequences, for a revolution took place which entirely changed the situation of the kingdom of Israel.

* 2 Kings, ch. viii. v. 7–15.

† These Aramean wars occupy an important position in the legend of Elisha; an account which is of no historical value, but which proves the importance of these wars during the first half of the ninth century.

CHAPTER IX.

TRIUMPH OF PROPHETISM.—JEHU.

While the two kings were at Jezreel, preparing to continue the struggle, a military conspiracy, led by Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, broke out in the army which had been left before Ramoth-gilead. It appears certain that this movement was instigated by the prophets. Their animosity towards the dynasty of Ahab was now at its height; the death of Jehoram was probably foreseen, and they were anxious to prevent any of Ahab's numerous sons or grandsons then at Samaria from being proclaimed king. According to some accounts, the prophet Elisha sent one of his disciples, the son of a prophet, to Ramoth to pour oil upon Jehu's head.* Elsewhere it is related that Elijah himself elected Jehu to be anointed with the holy oil.† But whenever Elijah and Elisha appear, fables appear with them. Elisha, however, might still have been alive,

* 2 Kings, ch. ix. v. 2 and following, a relatively historical account.

† 1 Kings, ch. xix. v. 16, account taken from the *agada*.

and the account which attributes him a share in the accession of the new dynasty appears to be founded on fact.*

Jehu, assured of the connivance of the officers in the army before Ramoth-gilead, started for Jezreel in his chariot, hastening as rapidly as possible over the eight or nine leagues which separated the two cities. No rumour of the conspiracy had reached Jezreel, and it was the sentry on the watch tower who first gave warning that some danger was at hand. The two kings went out in their chariots to meet the approaching foe, and just when Jehoram of Israel cried out to his ally, "Treason, Ahaziah!" Jehu drew his bow, and smote the king of Israel in the breast with an arrow which pierced through the body, Jehoram falling down and dying in his chariot.

If the conspiracy had been merely the work of a disloyal soldier who wished to get rid of his master and reign in his place, Jehu would have paused after the successful arrow had secured him the throne of Israel. But a proof that the hatred of the prophets against the house of Ahab was concealed behind Jehu's ambition is to be found

* If in other passages this incident is connected with Elijah, it is because Elijah's biography is frequently an exact copy of that of Elisha. It is not impossible even that the two legendary biographies may at first have formed only one narrative, the hero of which was called Elijah in some versions, Elisha in others. In any case the two accounts given in 1 Kings, ch. xix. v. 16, and 2 Kings, ch. ix. v. 2, are not taken from the same source.

in the fact that the latter, although he could not aspire to the throne of Jerusalem, was determined to kill Ahaziah at any hazard. After the death of his cousin near Jezreel, Ahaziah fled towards Carmel. He was wounded on the ascent towards Gur, which is near Ibleam, and died at Megiddo. His body was carried to Jerusalem in his chariot, and was buried in the royal sepulchre.

Jehu entered Jezreel after the murder of the two kings. Jezebel, who had been told of her son's death, showed heroic pride. She painted her face (probably with antimony), put on her royal head-dress, and, thus attired, placed herself at one of the palace windows. When Jehu entered the courtyard in his chariot, she cried out to him: "Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?" Jehu looked up at the windows, exclaiming: "Who is on my side —who?" His eyes met those of two or three eunuchs, who stood behind their mistress, and he cried out to them: "Throw her down." It was quickly done; and her blood sprinkled the walls and the chariot. Jehu then made the horses in his chariot trample upon the aged queen.

Jehu entered the palace to eat and drink. After his repast, he said: "Go now and seek this cursed woman and bury her, for she is a king's daughter." The body was searched for; but only the skull, the feet, and the palms of the hands could be found, the rest had been trampled into the mud by the horses.

Jehu then naturally took some precautions against

the numerous survivors of Ahab's family who were still at Samaria, for, including sons and grandsons, they numbered seventy persons. He wrote a hypocritical letter to the chief men of the city:

"Now as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your master's sons are with you, and his chariots and his horses, a fortified city and the arsenal, choose you the best and the meetest amongst the sons of your master and set him upon his father's throne, and fight ye for your master's house."

The cunning cruelty which distinguished Jehu gave this letter a terrible significance. The ruler of the palace, the rulers of the city, the elders, and the *omenim*, or tutors to the young princes, all hastened to send word of their submission to Jehu, and a second letter was then received from him: "If ye be mine, and ye will be my servants, then take the heads of your master's sons and come to me to Jezreel by to-morrow this time."* The seventy young princes were living with the chief men of the town, who brought them up. Each of these worthy citizens seized his royal charge and cut off his head. Then the heads were placed in baskets and sent to Jezreel. Jehu ordered them to be arranged in two heaps at the entrance of the palace gate. On the following morning he went out, stood at the

* This story is quite in accordance with Eastern customs at that date. The only thing which throws a doubt upon the correctness of the details is the subsequent statement (2 Kings, ch. x. v. 17) that the massacre of the princes took place after Jehu's entrance into Samaria.

gate, and said to the people: "Ye be righteous: behold, I conspired against my master and slew him, but who slew all these? Know now that not one word spoken by Iahveh shall fall to the earth." When one is persuaded that the unfortunate man is undoubtedly an outcast of God, the accomplished fact is easily justified.

From Jezreel, Jehu went to Samaria, which, in spite of the importance acquired by Jezreel, was still the capital of the kingdom. At the place called *Equed ha-roim*, he met a troop of the brethren of Ahaziah of Judah, who were going from Jerusalem to Jezreel to see the princes, their relations. They had not heard of the terrible catastrophe which had taken place. Jehu caused the whole band to be seized and slain on the spot, their bodies being thrown into a pit at *Equed ha-roim.*

A more curious encounter is reported to have taken place at the same time between him and Jehonadab, son of Rechab, who was coming to meet him.* Jehu saluted him, and said: "Is thine heart right as my heart is with thy heart?" "It is," replied Jehonadab. "Then, if it be, give me thine hand." And he gave it to him, and Jehu took him up into the chariot, and said to him: "Come with me and thou shalt see my zeal for the Lord." And he made him ride in his chariot to Samaria, where Jehu then killed all that remained of Ahab's family until it was exterminated, according to the

* See above, p. 240.

word that Iahveh spoke unto Elijah. The Rechabites, in fact, appear to have been directly connected with the school of Elijah.

Thus, strong in the support of the pietist party, Jehu, whose personal opinions remain in obscurity, proceeded with his terrible measures of purification. The theocratic writer, in whose eyes these massacres are highly praiseworthy, fully meriting Jehu's envied reward—that of founding a dynasty *—has surely exaggerated them, believing that he enhanced his hero's glory by so doing. It appears, however, that Jehu imported into all his actions the perfidious cruelty which renders him in history one of the precursors of Philip II. According to the account which has reached us, he convoked a great assembly for a festival in honour of Baal, and when the worshippers and priests of that deity were gathered in the courts of the temple at Samaria, he caused them all to be massacred by the soldiers of his guard. The troop then invaded the temple of Baal, took from it the sacred images, the wooden *masseboth*, and burnt them. The temple was destroyed and polluted.† Jehonadab is said to have been present with Jehu‡ at all these violent scenes.

In the old and grosser form of Iahveism, the vanquished was always in the wrong; a defeat was

* 2 Kings, ch. x. v. 30.

† If this be true, we must suppose that the heathen sanctuaries were afterwards rebuilt. Amos, ch. viii. v. 14.

‡ 2 Kings, ch. x. v. 23.

considered a chastisement from Iahveh. After these cruel massacres, it was discovered that everything that had happened to the house of Ahab was a righteous punishment, and had been predicted by the prophets. It was a judgment upon the profane tastes of the princes, upon their foreign alliances, and upon their little consideration—their violence, it was even said—for the men of God. The story was revived of Naboth, whom Ahab had dispossessed of his field for the enlargement of his palace at Jezreel, and whom Jezebel was supposed to have had put to death by means of false witnesses. A comparison of places was made, and it was believed that Jehoram's body was thrown upon Naboth's field. The words of the prophets were quoted, particularly the prophecy of Elijah foretelling that Ahab, Jezebel, and all their race should perish miserably, that the dogs should lick up their blood and fight for the fragments of their bodies. The prophets were victorious on every side, and Iahveh triumphed with them.

The terrible revolutions of Jezreel and Samaria might have taken place too rapidly for the tidings of them to reach Jerusalem before they were actually accomplished. Upon receiving the simultaneous news of the death of her son, her nephew, and of nearly all the princes of the two royal families, Athaliah acted as Jezebel had done. Arming herself with royal pride, she faced the danger with extraordinary courage. But, while tiring her head and painting her face, Jezebel knew that she was going to meet

her death. Athaliah's situation in Jerusalem was far from being equally desperate. Ahaziah had made her regent before leaving for the expedition to Ramoth-gilead; and the power was in her hands when the fatal news reached her.

Ahaziah's brothers had been killed by Jehu; but there still remained (without counting distant collateral branches which had retired into private life) some of Ahaziah's children who were still too young to reign. The idea of a feminine monarchy was quite beyond the imagination of the Israelites. And, besides this, the people of Judah were so deeply attached to the family of David that they were certain to cling obstinately to the children who represented the legitimate succession. Athaliah was appointed regent during the minority of the princes, her grandsons. She was a woman of great capacity, who had possessed considerable power under Jehoram and Ahaziah, and she now reigned in Jerusalem for seven years. The country was evidently favourable to her.* Far from detesting the family of Omri, the Jerusalemites had been accustomed for many years to regard it as the faithful ally of the house of David.

The difficulties encountered by Athaliah's government arose through the women of the royal family, above all from Jehosheba, a daughter of King Jehoram and sister to Ahaziah. Athaliah would have been the wonder of her age had she not made use

* The narrative relating to Nathan and the temple of Baal at Jerusalem appears to be a fable; 2 Kings, ch. xi. v. 18.

of crime to further her political designs. The young princes, as they grew older, were a daily menace to the power which she could not make up her mind to renounce. She had, in fact, exercised it for twelve years, and was then about forty years old. An abdication at that age would have been torture to her, and, considering the hatred which she had drawn upon herself, it would have meant a speedy sentence of death. A rumour arose of the assassination of some of the young princes; it was asserted that Athaliah caused them successively to disappear as they approached their majority. A scene of murder was described as having taken place in the "bed-chamber," a kind of nursery in the palace. The question was soon asked, were any of Ahaziah's sons still alive? The massacres of Jehu had accustomed the popular imagination to look for the recurrence of similar scenes. Public opinion was uneasy, and ready to accept every mysterious rumour.

Soon after this, Jehosheba, perhaps acting in concert with Jehoiada the high priest, who dwelt in the precincts of the Temple, unmasked an intrigue already skilfully prepared. She proclaimed that she had saved the life of a child named Joash, who was her brother Ahaziah's son, by a woman of Beersheba named Zebiah, and that she had hidden him in the buildings which surrounded the Temple. Jehoiada, the commander of the guard,* assembled the captains

* In the fourth verse of the eleventh chapter, Jehoiada is not a priest, but acts as commander of the guard. A priest had not the

of the *Carim* and the *racim* in the Temple, and then, having secured their allegiance by the most terrible oaths, he showed them the child who represented the race of David. The captains recognised him. Jehoiada the soldier then arranged a skilful manœuvre by which they could be massed together in the Temple without exciting Athaliah's suspicions. The guard when going off duty was not in the habit of taking away its arms; they were supplied by means of the votive weapons stored in the Temple. At a given moment, the scene so carefully prepared was unfolded. The youthful king appeared before the people, between the altar of sacrifice and the Temple, wearing the royal crown. He was proclaimed and anointed amid clapping of hands, shouts of "God save the king," and the sounding of the trumpets.*

right to convoke the army and give orders, just as he might have done if Athaliah had no *sar-saba*. After the ninth verse, Jehoiada is called a priest. The inaccuracy is at once perceived. In the first account Jehoiada was chief of the *Carim*. In another version it was found expedient to make him a priest. This transformation was rendered easier by the discovery of a *Jehoiada haccohen* (ch. xii. v. 8 and following, a much more historical portion) in the latter part of the history of Joash. The supposed ingratitude of Joash towards his protector is in this case got rid of. It is remarkable that the name *Jehoiada* is not mentioned in the list of the high priests given in the Book of Chronicles (1 Chronicles, ch. v. v. 30 and following). The Jehoiada referred to in Jeremiah, ch. xxix. v. 26, is not connected with this story.

* The account given in 2 Kings, ch. ix., of this conspiracy which overthrew Athaliah is full of anachronisms. It was certainly written, or at all events re-arranged in its present form, after the Captivity. The reference to the Thora and covenant (v. 12, 17) is

Athaliah, hearing the noise, hastened to the spot, crying, "Treason, treason!" Every one deserted her, and she was killed with a sword in the covered passage used for the horses' entrance into the palace court. The little king was then taken to the palace and enthroned. The populace, which always approved of a *coup d'état* in which it was invited to join, displayed the greatest enthusiasm in its rejoicings.

Thus, within a few years Iahveism had won two decisive victories. At Jerusalem, the strength of the sentiment in favour of the legitimate dynasty had re-established the ancient line, now regarded as sacred. In Israel, prophetism had overthrown a dynasty which it considered inimical to its interests. The die was cast. The profane party of civilisation and progress, which had already once been worsted after the death of Solomon, was again defeated by the destruction of the house of Ahab. A nation

certainly posterior to Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy, ch. xvii. v. 18 and following). The organisation of the Temple, with its high priest and a large staff, carries us back to the time when Joshua, son of Joyadak, triumphed over Zerubbabel. The assemblies in the Temple and the religious ceremony which took place on the Sabbath day (v. 49) are evidently a prolepsis. The weapons of David (v. 10) are also open to objection. All this history in the Book of Kings is written with the object of proving the miraculous preservation of the house of David by the priests and by the Temple. The Book of Chronicles relates it with yet stronger clerical colours. In it Jehoiada is married to Jehosheba. The whole *coup d'état* was the work of the Levites. The Temple was described according to the model of the organisation afterwards attained at the time of the purest theocracy.

never fills two parts at the same time. From 850 or 860, it was written that Israel would never resemble any other people. The Monarchy was overcome. This people was to occupy an insignificant position in the temporal order, but it would be unequalled in its religious influence. Here the future is not in the hands of wise kings or sensible politicians, but in those of visionaries, utopists, and inspired democrats who commanded revolutions and made or unmade dynasties.

This terrible prophetism of the time of the Omrides is too deeply stained with hatred and barbarism for us not to revolt at the first idea of reckoning among the precursors of Jesus these species of monomaniacs whom chroniclers intended to glorify when they credited them with the most abominable deeds of vengeance and cruelty. In the struggle between these demoniacs and the monarch, the latter was usually in the right. The counsels of the prophets were always the most implacable and the least practical. No quarter must be shown to the enemy; no alliance must be entered into with the *goim*;* the rights of war must be carried to the most cruel extremes. To kill everybody without mercy appeared to them the ideal aim of every warrior of Iahveh.†

* The use of this word, which means "the nations," with an implication of "heathen," dates from the prophetism of the ninth century.

† 1 Kings, ch. xx. v. 35–43. Compare the incident of Agag, mentioned in the history of Saul, and derived from the same source.

To spare the vanquished or yield to any human feelings was the worst of crimes. While reading these hideous stories one is often led to think, "Luckily, it is not true;" these accounts have been written long afterwards by fanatics who believed they were reflecting glory upon their ancestors by crediting them with atrocities. One text in the ideal legislation, which is almost contemporary with the school of Elijah, and which was perhaps suggested by that school, pronounces the *herem*, *i.e.*, excommunication entailing the penalty of death, against every Israelite who sacrificed to any other god but Iahveh.*

Nearly all the ancient republics founded on the family and upon national deities (*sacra*), had the same anathemas. Whoever refused to join in the worship of the city to which he belonged cut himself off from the city by that act. But the crisis then taking place in Israel led to quite novel results. The worship of Iahveh came in time to imply a faith and a morality; in fact, a number of things which were neither national nor municipal. In this way the Semitic *herem* became a principle of persecution and of fanaticism. The national god of Israel will be the absolute god; his worship must not be confined to harmless demonstrations; to impose it is to impose a dogma,— that is to say, the one thing in the world least susceptible of being commanded.

It is clear that the people were devoted to

* Exodus, ch. xxii. v. 19 (Book of the Covenant).

fanaticism, but fanaticism in its hands was not purely destructive, as in the case of Islam. By a miracle of which there is but one other example, viz. the Reformation of the sixteenth century, Jewish fanaticism at last ended in the most liberal creed ever seen in the world, in the religion of a God universally worshipped by the whole human race.

Fanaticism, in fact, can produce the most varied results, according to the motive which inspires it. There is a visible difference between sacerdotal fanaticism and that outside a priesthood. Protestantism, which originally implied elements bearing considerable resemblance to those which characterised the prophetism of Israel, has, with the aid of time, become very liberal, while Catholic fanaticism, such as that of Philip II. and Pius V., has only produced evil and has never been transformed. Individual inspiration never created anything so dangerous as an infallible Church or a Papacy. The stern seers of Israel were unintentionally emancipators, for they contended against the worst of tyrannies, the connivance of ignorant crowds with a degraded priesthood.

CHAPTER X.

THE CONCEPTION OF A SACRED HISTORY.

THE prophetism which struggled under Ahab and triumphed under Jehu is, although enveloped in obscurity, upon the whole the most decisive event in the history of Israel. It forms the commencement of the chain which, after nine hundred years, found the last link in Jesus. Elijah and Elisha belong entirely to legend; we know but one fact concerning them—that they were great men. Iahveism, which at Jerusalem was only a creed, became, in the schools of the prophets of the North, a religious leaven of the greatest power. The prophetism of the North not only created Elijah, it also created Moses, the sacred history, and the first rudiments of the Thora. It was, therefore, the starting-point of both Judaism and Christianity. In all that relates to the progress of religion, Jerusalem appears to us, at this epoch of history, as being in arrear of the tribes of the North.

The prophets of the ninth century, in spite of gloomy passions, and what we should call serious theological mistakes, deserve the important rank they

occupy in the history of human progress. They had almost reached the conviction that Iahveh was the only God. They returned, after a long succession of errors and superstitions, to the Elohism of the patriarchal age. An extraordinary pride of race then became the fundamental moving power of the life of Israel. To say that Israel was Iahveh's people, in itself meant very little. Moab also was the people of Chemosh. But the position was quite changed when Iahveh was no longer distinguished from the God who had created the heavens and the earth, the God who loves righteousness and the law. Thus, instead of having a national god, like other nations, Israel became the elect of God, the people chosen by the Absolute Being, the unique nation. From that time its history could bear no resemblance to any other. Iahveh had accomplished for Israel wonders that no other god could have achieved for his people. The old souvenirs of Ur-Casdim and Harran were revived, and a sacred history was produced. The prophets appeared like the inspired teachers of Israel; and was not Moses, who led the people out of Egypt, the first of the prophets? And surely Abraham, who issued from the Babylonian fables, and who, in the remote past, seemed like the father of civilisation, was the first author of the covenant? The call of Abraham, and the promises made to him, still undefined in the patriarchal legends,* became the corner-stone of a

* Genesis, ch. xv., and especially ch. xx. v. 13, where the polytheist and heathen character is still perceptible.

religion, the basis of the covenant between Israel and its God.

These ideas were stirring throughout all Israel, but chiefly among the tribes, because liberty and religious activity were more freely developed in the North. At Jerusalem, the Temple was a constraint; and the priesthood, although as yet scarcely organised, had its usual effect of dulling mental activity, and struggled against it. The prophet, not being a priest, was free from the weight which clogs the foot of every sacerdotal body. The crisis produced by the prophetic school in the time of Ahab and Jehoram had given immense prominence to religious questions. Books existed containing the patriarchal and historical legends edited about one hundred years before; but the religious character of these books was not sufficiently exclusive. They were collections of anecdotes and popular songs, full of interest and charm; but not the sacred volume of which a nation makes its tabernacle and its life. The necessity for a book containing the fundamental dogma of religion was then felt. This dogma was, in Israel, entirely historical; it was the description of the successive phases of the covenant between Iahveh and his people. It became expedient to compile in a single work the elements of history which the nation possessed, or believed it possessed. The great work of Israel was visibly growing; a deep transformation took place; sacred history was created.

The Book of Legends, in fact, was far from having exhausted the oral traditions, and particularly that ancient background of Babylonian ideas, upon which the people had lived for some centuries; while many elements of oral tradition were to be found side by side with the incomplete written documents. It would appear, more especially, that the old book contained no account of the creation or of the first appearance of humanity. The traditions on this point were interminable and inconsistent. They were related in mnemonic series, capable of several very important variations.* They were taught in a way; and perhaps the long periods of leisure of the *navoth*, or prophetic schools, were occupied in reciting these old legends. Everything relating to Moses was wanting in sequence.† Most of the genealogies, strung one after another like beads on a chaplet, were also learnt by heart, which was a poor guarantee for their accuracy. Many may, however, have been written before this. The Book of the Wars of Iahveh was a true storehouse; but it did not go back beyond the first battles fought by the Israelites as they approached Palestine, somewhere near the Arnon.

But the chief defect in the books of Iahveist history written before this time is found in their

* Compare, for instance, the list of Cainites and Sethites.

† See the song of Bier (Numbers, ch. xxi. v. 17, 18) and the incident of Balaam (ibid. ch. xxii. and following). See above, pp. 173, 174, 187, 188.

moral and religious prescripts. One idea had become dominant in the schools of the prophets, namely, that Iahveh imposed certain rules and laws upon his followers. A short code was formed, and this code was regarded as a condition of the covenant entered into by the god and his people. In addition to those facts in religious history which were intended to prove that Israel had given a special pledge to Iahveh, the articles of this covenant were enumerated, that is, the laws reputed to have been imposed upon the people by Iahveh himself. These laws consisted partly of various provisions of a customs law, varying in antiquity, partly of sacerdotal or ritualistic regulations, and partly of moral laws, the result of the humanitarian movement already appearing in the schools of the prophets. Moses was regarded as the universal promulgator of these laws which Iahveh was supposed to have inspired.

A sacred history was formed out of these elements upon the following lines: *

In the beginning Iahveh created the heavens and the earth, and therefore man. The first men were giants, who lived eight or nine hundred years and created a primitive civilisation, in which evil was much stronger than good, and which was swept

* For the perfect comprehension of what follows, a version should be used where the Iahveist and Elohist texts are both given, either separately or printed in different characters; for instance, M. François Lenormant's *Genèse*, or Reuss's translation.

away by the deluge. One righteous man, Noah, was saved from the waters and repeopled the earth through his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet. Shem was the father of the elect; one of his descendants was that Abraham of Ur-Casdim with whom God entered into an eternal covenant. His son and grandson, Isaac and Jacob, wandered as nomads in the land of Canaan, of which God had promised them the future possession. The covenant was renewed with each of them, particularly with Jacob. Joseph, Jacob's son, sent for his brothers into Egypt, where, in course of time, they found themselves reduced to a state of slavery. Iahveh delivered them by the great prophet Moses, who led them to Sinai. There Iahveh appeared to them in the most solemn manifestation, renewed his covenant with them, and pronounced the laws which enforced this covenant. Moses led the people to the borders of the promised land, but Joshua accomplished the conquest of it, and divided it among the sons of Israel, so that the property of every good Israelite is of theocratic origin, the division of the land being ordained by Iahveh himself.*

These stories were related with considerable variations both in Israel and Judah. The substance of it all was already written in the Books of the patriarchal Legends and the Wars of Iahveh; but these books were not widely diffused and had not extinguished the fertility of legend. Oral tradition

* See the incident of Naboth, 1 Kings, ch. xxi.

is essentially variable. The arrangement of the antediluvian genealogies differed with every traditionalist. There were at least two Noahs, one of them a virtuous man, another who planted the vine. The adventures attributed to Abraham were often placed to the credit of Isaac or Jacob, and *vice versâ.* The history of Ishmael is related in three or four ways. Each version of the story of Moses differed totally from the other. The laws attributed to him were not at all fixed. The history of the deluge was the only tradition that preserved its uniform lines. The sketch of this event continued to preserve, trait for trait, the same features as the account brought from Mesopotamia by the primitive Hebrews, which is now found on the bricks of one of the palaces in Nineveh.*

We can never know under what conditions this history, which is both sacred and national, was com-

* The prophets of the commencement of the eighth century whose authentic writings we possess were acquainted with the call of Abraham, the myths of Jacob (particularly Hosea, ch. xii. v. 5, 13–15), the captivity in Egypt, the plagues of Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea (Hosea, ch. xii. v. 10; ch. xiii. v. 4; Zechariah, ch. x. v. 11), the unfaithful acts and the forty years' wandering in the desert (Amos, ch. ii. v. 10, 25, 26), Moses (Hosea, ch. xii. v. 14; Micah, ch. vi. v. 4); Balaam (Micah, ch. vi. v. 5); Baal-Peor (Hosea, ch. ix. v. 10); Sihon (Amos, ch. ii. v. 9). The references are still more frequent in Isaiah, ch. iv. v. 5; ch. xi. v. 15; ch. xxix. v. 22, etc. Amongst the anterior traditions the old prophets knew the story of the deluge, the fables upon the origin of the Dead Sea (Amos, ch. iv. v. 11; ch. ix. v. 6; Hosea, ch. xi. v. 8; compare Job, ch. xxvi. v. 5), and Nimrud (Micah, ch. v. v. 5).

posed. The only thing which can be asserted was that it was edited in two forms, without the two writers knowing anything of each other's work, much as the mass of the traditions of Jewish casuistry was arranged twelve hundred years later in the two Talmuds, called after Jerusalem and Babylon. From many signs it would appear that other editions existed, which were afterwards blended with the two first in one single account. This also happened with the Gospels, but with the difference that the Gospels never attained uniformity.

This multiplicity of collations is almost inevitable whenever an old stock of oral traditions is committed to writing. The collation is never made officially, but in a complex, sporadical fashion, without skill or unity. In very ancient times, men had no idea of the identity of a book ; every one wished his own copy to be complete, and added to it all the supplements necessary to keep it up to date. There were not two copies alike, while the number of copies was extremely limited. At that epoch, a book was not recopied, but remade. When any one wished to revive an old work, he also reinvigorated it by combining it with other documents. Every book was composed with absolute irresponsibility, without a title, or the author's name, incessantly transformed, receiving endless additions and commentaries. The book, if one may be allowed to borrow a comparison from natural history, was therefore a mollusc and not a vertebrate. This renders more or less barren the

researches which claim to have attained anything like analytical precision in these matters ; the main facts alone can be absolutely distinguished, though the general laws may be caught a glimpse of, even when the details have been lost. Through a thousand uncertainties the historian may succeed in discovering the mode of compiling these ancient documents, which, by a strange fatality, have become, in the eyes of faith, the very record of the origin of the universe.

CHAPTER XI.

THE VERSION OF THE NORTH, CALLED JEHOVIST (IAHVEIST).

THE version of the North was certainly the first in date and the most original. The kingdom of the North had the very great advantage, for this work of compilation, of possessing an excellent groundwork in the Book of Legends, where the patriarchal history is related in the most exquisite manner. The new editor * took this important work as his basis and model; he frequently contented himself with copying from it; but he added some of the

* To conform with custom I will call this work the Iahveist. It is the document C of the Germans. That the Iahveist document was written in the North is to be gathered from the general character of the book, and from a number of details in which Ephraimite prejudices are much more visible than Jerusalemite (Reuss, *The Bible*, i. pp. 198, 199, against Dillmann). Judah is depreciated in it (Genesis, ch. xxxvii. v. 26 and following; ch. xliii. v. 3 and following; ch. xliv. v. 16 and following; ch. xlvi. v. 28). Note the efforts made to exalt Bethel. Hebron (Genesis, ch. xiii. v. 18; ch. xviii. v. 1; ch. xxxvii. v. 14) was in some degree a city belonging to the whole people of Israel. The reminiscences of Gerar and of Beersheba (compare Amos, ch. v. v. 5; ch. viii. v. 14) were already consecrated by the patriarchal legends. See above, pp. 175, 176.

most essential parts, particularly in the portion relating to primitive humanity. He blended with the old account some later traditions, softened many passages which had become too forcible owing to their crudity, explained in his own fashion certain others which he could not understand,* and suppressed the proper names which he considered useless to the eurythmy of his narrative.† The history of the conquest of Canaan was compiled from the Book of the Wars of Iahveh, and partly from a legendary account in which the conquest and systematic division of the country were attributed to Joshua. Lastly, with regard to Moses, the author introduced a Book of the Alliance into his story, containing the original covenant between Iahveh and his people, entered into at the time of the apparition on Sinai.

But the Iahveist editor had one personal characteristic which distinguished him from all his predecessors, who do not appear to have troubled to explain God and the world, any more than did the Homeric authors. This was a profound philosophy, shrouded under a veil of myth ; a sombre and gloomy conception of nature, a kind of pessimist hatred of humanity. His Iahveh is terrible and always angry ; he so often repents of having created man that scrupulous logic would at last suggest the question why he did it ? One seems to hear the complaints of the later Hegelians of our own days,

* For instance, Genesis, ch. xv. v. 2, 3.

† For instance, Eleazar. Genesis, ch. xxiv.

delighting in meditations upon sin, and founding religion upon the obstinate force with which the idea of evil presents itself. The accounts of the fall, of Cain and Abel, of the giants or *nefilim*, and of the deluge, are devoted to the great object of proving that man's thoughts instinctively turn towards evil.* The Iahveist resembles the prophets in his hatred of civilisation, which he regards as a decadence from the patriarchal state. Each step forward in the path of what we call progress is a crime in his eyes, followed by immediate punishment. Civilisation is punished by labour, and by the division of humanity. The attempt at worldly, profane, monumental, and artistic culture at Babel was the greatest of all crimes. Nimrud was a rebel. Whoever was great in any respect in Iahveh's sight is his rival.

What is now called Mussulman fatalism is, in reality, Iahveist fatalism. Jealous of his glory, susceptible on the point of honour, Iahveh hated all human efforts. Man insulted him by endeavouring to know the world and to improve it. No one must attempt to co-operate with Iahveh. In the accomplishment of his great designs he likes to make use of widows and barren women, in order that no one should share his glory. He prefers the young to the elders. Jacob, who first crossed the Jordan with only his staff in his hand, and who returns the head of a large tribe, pleased Iahveh by his humility.† Every step in the development of

* Genesis, ch. vi. v. 3, 5 and following. † Ibid. ch. xxxii. v. 11.

humanity is made in defiance of God's will. God wished for a single man who, with his wife, would inhabit a delicious garden for ever. Man, by his unseasonable thirst for knowledge, disturbed this scheme. The first town was built by a race rendered outcast by murder and evil. God intended to create one single human race, a single language. The mad enterprise of Babylon led to the dispersion, which was, in its way, a punishment—a decadence. The beauty of the daughters of men only served to tempt celestial beings, and to produce a monstrous race. If God for a moment regretted that he had allowed the deluge to take place, it was because he saw that the only means of reforming humanity would be by destroying it, and after this fruitless experiment he resolved henceforth to allow men to follow their own desires.

The painful melancholy which pervades these ideas attains sublimity, thanks to the forcible style in which the account is given, for throughout the annals of antiquity we find no other work that resembles it in any degree. The tone of the narrative, alternately bold and easy, very similar, however, to the usual style of the Book of Legends, recalls the finest Homeric rhapsodies. An habitual mixture of vulgarity and elevation, of realism and idealism, holds the reader's attention always fast. Prose melts into poetry by imperceptible gradations; for instance, in the account of Babel, in the words of Adam when he first saw Eve, in Noah's canticle, and in the

blessings pronounced by Isaac,* the rhythm appears spontaneously, or rather is heard as the prolonged echo of the past. It is still the infancy of the human mind, but an infancy full of promise of a vigorous youth; at times, already bordering on maturity.

The author has met with more than one difficulty in combining the earliest records, *i.e.* the Book of Legends and the Book of the Wars, with the living traditions. His embarrassment is frequently perceptible, especially when the traditions contradict each other. He then proceeds by juxtaposition, according to a system which might fitly be called duplex, and which is very visible in the Gospels, particularly in the Gospel called after St. Matthew.† For instance, the myth relating to the Garden of Eden varied considerably in the different traditions. According to one version, the central tree of Paradise was the tree of life; according to another, it was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Iahveist writer decided to place them both in the centre;‡ and in the latter parts of the story, the two trees are alternately confused with each other or alluded to separately.§

* I must not fail to add that in these passages the distinction between the Book of Legends and the Iahveist version, or as the Germans say, between document B and document C, is very difficult to trace.

† See *Les Evangiles*, pp. 178–180.

‡ Genesis, ch. ii. v. 9.

§ Ibid. ch. iii. v. 5, 6, 22 (twice).

Inconsistencies of the same kind are also noticeable in the history of Ishmael,* in the fine narrative of the journey taken by Abraham's servant,† perhaps in the legend of Esau overcome by fatigue.‡ Abraham's adventure in Pharaoh's house,§ and that of Isaac with Abimelech,|| are different versions of the same story, neither of which the editor was willing to omit. The "laughter" which served as a basis for the etymology of Isaac is related in two versions.¶

In order to explain how the sinking of the same wells is attributed, sometimes to Abraham, sometimes to Isaac, the author admits that the wells referred to were first dug by Abraham, then stopped up by the Philistines, then again redug by Isaac.** Bethel is twice consecrated as a holy spot by Abraham and by Jacob.†† The manner in which Esau was supplanted is related in two incidents, thanks to a subtle distinc-

* The Iahveist version of Ishmael's story is found in Genesis, ch. xvi. v. 1–14, less 3.

† Ibid. ch. xxiv., from v. 63.

‡ Ibid. ch. xxv. v. 29 and following. In one of these accounts it appears that Jacob took advantage of Esau's appetite when returning from hunting, and in another the state of famine to which the toilsome occupation of hunting had reduced him.

§ Ibid. ch. xii.

|| Ibid. ch. xxvi. Chapter xx. is directly taken from B., either by the Iahveist, or rather by the compiler. See above, pp. 163, 164.

¶ Ibid. ch. xviii. v. 12, and ch. xxi. v. 6. It is true that this ast account seems taken from B.

** Ibid. ch. xxvi. v. 18 and following. It is not impossible that this arrangement was by the compiler called by the Germans B.

†† Ibid. ch. xii. v. 8, and ch. xxviii. v. 18, 19.

tion between the right of primogeniture and the paternal blessings.* Everything relating to Moses' family is highly contradictory.† In a great many instances, the author, meeting with a difficulty, or unable to thoroughly understand his authorities, extenuates, distorts, or gives a weak explanation of passages of which he has missed the meaning. It is as though Masoudi, or any other Arab story-teller, instead of giving all the traditions from beginning to end, and closing the enumeration with the sacramental formula, "God knows best where the truth lies," felt himself obliged to conciliate the various details, even if he falsified them all.

The sacred history, as it issued from the pen of the Iahveist writer, has only reached us in a fragmentary way. We shall see presently how a compiler (in the time of Hezekiah, as I think) combined the sacred history of the North with an analogous book written in Jerusalem, and in this work of compilation suppressed entire pages of both documents, to avoid useless repetitions, too evident contradictions, or even to remove certain passages which he considered objectionable. In this way the commencement of the sacred history of Israel was much abridged. The compiler, after copying the fine opening of the Jerusalemite version, suppressed the parallel passages of the northern edition. It is supposed, however, that the account of the six

* Genesis, ch. xxv. and xxvii.

† See Reuss, *Bible*, i. p. 43.

days' creation was missing in this first Genesis.* The opening was probably: "On the day that Iahveh † made the earth and the heavens." ‡ The creation of light, order established in place of chaos, the creation of the stars, filled the portion now suppressed, and then the author continued his account of the creation of the world in these words:

And as yet there was no tree in the field, and herbs of the field were not set growing, for Iahveh had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. And Iahveh formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. And Iahveh planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground Iahveh made every tree to grow that is pleasant to the sight, and that bears fruit good to eat, and the tree of life also in the midst of the garden (and the tree of knowledge of good and evil). And a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from thence it was divided into four branches. . . . And Iahveh took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.§

According to our edition, the creation of man, therefore, took place at a time when the earth was still without water or vegetation. Iahveh planted a garden expressly for him, watered by a river divided into four streams. The man was alone, the only

* This appears from Genesis, ch. ii. v. iv. See below, p. 323.

† *Elohim* after *Iahveh* has been added by the compiler.

‡ Genesis, ch. ii. v. 4.

§ I have shown (in vol. i.) that this myth of the primitive Paradise is only a reproduction of the Babylonian ideas on the cradle of the human race, in the region of the lower Euphrates.

individual in the world, of masculine sex, and immortal.

And Iahveh said, It is not good that the man should be alone; let us make him an help-meet for him. And out of the ground, Iahveh formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air, and brought them to the man, to see what he would call them; and whatsoever the man called every living creature that was the name thereof. And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field, but for all that, for the man was there not found an help-meet for him. And Iahveh caused a deep sleep * to fall upon the man, and he slept, and Iahveh took one of his ribs and closed up the hole with flesh. And Iahveh made a woman from the rib which he had taken from the man, and he brought her to the man. And the man said, This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called *Isha* because she was taken out of *Ish*. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

We know what follows; how the serpent, the most subtle of animals, induced first the woman and then the man to disobey the command of Iahveh respecting the tree, the fruit of which would make them elohim; how when their eyes were opened they were ashamed and made themselves aprons of fig leaves; how Iahveh, walking in the garden in the cool of the evening, overwhelmed them by his denunciation of their disobedience. As a punishment for their temptation, the serpent is condemned to crawl upon the earth and to eat dust, while enmity was declared between him and the human race. The woman was

* *Tardema*, a mysterious slumber during which man is brought into communication with God.

condemned to bring forth children in sorrow; and the man was condemned to labour and to die. If he should succeed in once more eating of the fruit of the tree of life, it would restore his immortality. To prevent this occurring, Iahveh drove man out of the Garden of Eden and placed cherubim* at the entrance of the garden, armed with flaming swords which turned every way,† so that no one should again enter the way that led to the tree of life.

The history of humanity then begins. Man called his wife by an Aramean name, *Havva* or *Chavah* (the giver of life). Iahveh himself, this *costumier à la Michael Angelo*, makes them coats of skins and clothes them. The birth of Cain follows their union, then that of Abel (this author did not recognise Seth), the one a shepherd, the other a husbandman. Both of them offered sacrifices to Iahveh, who accepted those of Abel and refused those of Cain; jealousy arose between the two brothers on this account, and one of them murdered the other.

The sons of Cain people the world. Cain builds the first city and names it after his son Enoch. Here we are again in contact with the oldest mythologies. The genealogies which follow are filled with fabulous personages who recall the inventing

* Monsters—supposed to be formed like the models of the bulls who guarded the doors of the palaces (see the models in the Louvre).

† An obscure allusion to some Assyrian myth.

and civilising gods of Phœnicia and Chaldea.* The Iahveist narrator, even in this part, makes considerable quotations from the Book of Legends, and some rhythms of a most original character are particularly noticeable.†

It is very difficult, too, to distinguish the part of the Iahveist writer from that of the Book of Legends in the curious account of the sons of God (*i.e.* the angels) intermarrying with the daughters of men—a strange union from which sprang a race of giants (*nefilim*), the heroes of some old epic stories. The gloomy pessimist nature of our author, his tendency to discover universal sin, is visible in what follows. The world is wicked and naturally prone to evil. Its corruption having reached its highest point, Iahveh repents of having created man and resolves to exterminate him. Noah only found favour in his eyes. Here the divergence from the Book of Legends is very clearly seen. The Book of Legends refers to Noah but not to the deluge.‡ Its Noah is the planter of the vine and the inventor of wine, "this great comforter," which consoles man for the labour and toil of his hands in cultivating the ground.§

* See the fragments of the Phœnician mythology of Philo of Byblos or Sanchoniathon.

† Genesis, ch. iv. v. 23, 24.

‡ This is proved by the combination being binary in the account of the deluge; the document B is never to be caught a glimpse of behind the actual text, as it so frequently is in the history of the patriarchs, for instance in the story of Ishmael.

§ Genesis, ch. v. v. 29. It was certainly the Iahveist who inserted the words "which Iahveh has cursed."

The Iahveist author has represented Noah as a hero, a righteous man and the saviour of humanity.*

The account of the deluge, according to the version given by the Israelite editor, is entirely preserved to us in the singularly striking narrative of the actual text. Noah, on leaving the ark, built an altar to Iahveh, and offered a burnt sacrifice which Iahveh accepted, and which reconciled him to the human race.

We have only extracts from the following pages; a Chaldean legend of Nimrud, the mighty hunter and founder of Babel,† was probably borrowed from the cycle of fables upon the giants, to which we have just alluded. Here was also found the curious account of the construction of the Tower of Bel and the confusion of tongues, a rhythmical account, full of assonances and puns instinct of the ancient hatred cherished against Babylon.‡ It is evidently borrowed either from the Book of Legends or from some other source unknown to us.

The histories of Abraham and Isaac, and particularly of Jacob and Joseph, essentially Israelitish stories, all written in the North, were closely imitated

* Enoch appears to have been another Noah, arrested in his formation and detached by the legend for another story.

† Genesis, ch. x. v. 8, 9.

‡ Ibid. ch. xi.; Herodotus I. 181. The legend of Babel belongs to the category of popular stories inscribed upon some of the monuments and still undeciphered. See vol. i. pp. 59–61. It was through a mistake that the inscription commemorating the restoration of the tower of Borsippa was supposed to refer to the legend of the confusion of tongues.

by the Iahveist author from the Book of Legends.* In his hands, the history of Abraham assumes an almost exclusively religious character. The sacrifice of the first-born, which the author of the Legends borrowed from the oldest mythical souvenirs, became a transcendent act of faith, a deliberate resolve to hope against all hope.

From that time Abraham becomes the pivot of Iahveism; he was the founder of the religion of Iahveh, and built altars to Iahveh† in all directions, several of which are still extant. As a rule, wherever the old text places cippi, the Iahveist places altars.‡ The call of Abraham and the promises made to him appear, in the first scheme of the narrative, as the important point which the author wishes to bring into relief. Without concerning himself with genealogies to the same extent as we shall presently find the Judaic editor doing in Jerusalem, our author is well acquainted with the myths that link Israel with the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Arabs and Arameans. He delights in anecdotes of Lot, Sodom and the cities of the Asphaltite basin. The holy places which he connects with the original worship of Iahveh are Shechem and Beth-el, and in the south, Hebron and Beersheba.§ Even while he remains faithful to the traditions of the South, he is inclined to attribute to Ephraim scenes which

* Genesis, particularly ch. xxvii. and following.

† Ibid. ch. xiii. v. 4, 18.

‡ Consult vol. i. p. 43. § See above, pp. 175, 284, 285, note.

the most ancient narrative places in Gerar and in the Nedjeb. The error of having introduced the Philistines into the patriarchal history may very possibly be his doing.* On the other hand, the two incidents by which Jacob supplanted Esau and the separation of the Arameans from the Beni-Jacob† are related according to the patriarchal legends, with keen historical feeling. The blessings bestowed by the dying patriarchs ‡ are borrowed from the treasury of the popular poetry of the different tribes.

The legend of Moses is essentially the creation of our author. Accounts of the captivity in Egypt and of the Exodus existed previously, at least in substance. But he has stamped them powerfully with his own views. The classic picture of the passage of the Red Sea appears to be his work.§ The Iahveh of the Mosaic history is as grandiose as the god who ruled over the first creation of the earth. To his people he is harsh, full of complaints, but also full of indulgence and even of tenderness. He refrains from personally accompanying this "stiff-necked"|| people on their way. "If I went up in

* Genesis, ch. xxvi. v. 1, 15, 18. † Ibid. ch. xxxi.

‡ Ibid. ch. xxvii. and xlix. The benedictions of Moses (Deuteronomy, ch. xxxiii.) were also, as it would appear, a portion of the Iahveist version. See below, p. 307. The Elohist author does not mention this kind of benedictions. No one can tell how many of these poems were found in document B.

§ Exodus, ch. xv. v. 17, however, prevents us from attributing the canticle in ch. xv. to an Israelitish source.

|| Ibid. ch. xxxiii. v. 1 and following, v. 17–23. Compare ch. xxxiv. v. 9.

the midst of you for a moment," he said, "I should consume you." However, he consented to show Moses his glory. "Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live. Behold, I know a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock. And it shall come to pass while my glory passes by, that I will put thee in a cliff of the rock and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by. And I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back, but my face shall not be seen." God then passed before him, crying "Iahveh, Iahveh!" Elijah is reputed to have seen a vision upon Horeb,* which bears the most striking resemblance to the preceding account. As a rule, the Iahveh of the legend of Elijah presents so many analogies with the Iahveh of the Iahveist accounts, that one is tempted to believe that they were both conceived about the same time, and almost in the same religious circle. The institution of the Passover (an old festival held in the spring) was already considered as being historically connected with the departure from Egypt.† But an important innovation is marked by the insertion of a small code into the book of sacred history—a code which summarised all the moral legislation of a nation as understood by the Iahveism of the North.‡ The Book of Legends does not

* 1 Kings, ch. xix. and following. See above, pp. 237–239.

† Exodus, ch. xii.

‡ Book of the Alliance, from Exodus, ch. xx. v. 24, as far as v. 19 of ch. xxiii. See below, p. 306 and following.

appear to have contained anything of the kind. The promulgation of this divine law was reputed to have taken place in the midst of the thunder on Sinai. I shall revert presently to this important subject.

From the moment when the tribes approached Palestine and fought their first battles against the peoples already established in the country,* the author finds in the Book of the Wars of Iahveh and in the *Jasar* documents of real historical value. The heroic story of Caleb † appears taken from this source, and from it come the invaluable songs on the finding of the spring at Beer and the siege of Heshbon, the curious episode of Balaam, perhaps the blessings of Moses,‡ resembling in style those bestowed by Jacob upon his sons, and, like the latter, taken from old poetic sayings which had become proverbial.

The Iahveist, as he is called, is certainly one of the most extraordinary writers who ever existed. He is a gloomy thinker, at once religious and pessimist, like certain philosophers of the new German school, Hartmann for instance. He rivalled Hegel in his use and abuse of general formulæ.§ He loved

* Numbers, ch. xx. v. 1 and following (omit 2–13).

† Joshua, ch. xv. and following.

‡ Deuteronomy, ch. xxxiii., a piece of Israelitish composition (notice particularly v. 7) with the exception of a few interpolations (v. 8 and following).

§ One man, one family, one race, one language, one vine from which all others spring, one single source for the rivers, etc.

unity. Division was always an annoyance to him, and was quickly followed by a return to unity. He was quite as anthropomorphous and almost as mythological as the author of the Book of Legends, but his religious opinions were much more developed. The Iahveist was certainly a religious creator of the first rank. We may consider that the incomparable myths of the second and third chapters of Genesis, the accounts of Eden, of the creation of woman and of the fall of man, are his personal work. A profound, though, as we hold it, an erroneous idea fills his pages, seemingly so childlike. This conception of a primitive sovereign man, ignorant of death, labour or pain, astonishes us by its boldness. The account of the creation of woman, of the temptation, of shame proceeding from sin, of the large leaves of the Indian fig tree serving to veil the nascent feeling of shame, are the most philosophical myths that exist in any religion.

As a rule, in anything connected with the relations of the two sexes, with love or marriage, the Iahveist is profound, sensitive, chaste, mysterious. Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Rachel, are his creations. Let us think for a moment, in the patriarchal legends, of the episodes of the sons of God and the daughters of man, of Lot and his daughters. It is all gloomy, grandiose, immoral, like the old fables of the amours of earth and heaven. With the Iahveist all is human. His grand conception, Iahveh himself, intervenes in questions of marriage, and interests

himself in lovers.* No one is so tender as an austere man; the same *Kalam* was able to pen phrases of infinite sensibility, such as Genesis, ch. ii. v. 23, 24; ch. xxiv. v. 67;† and yet write the first texts of the terrible and, in some respects, fatal dogma of original sin.

It may be said, in fact, that original sin was an invention of the Iahveist. For him, evil is "the way of all flesh." Every step of human progress is a sin; humanity only advances by a succession of sins. And with him sin is frequently, like the myth of Œdipus, an act unconsciously committed. Sin through ignorance entails the same consequences as intentional sin.‡ The explanation of all human history by the tendency to evil, by the innate corruption of nature,§ is due to the Iahveist, and was the basis of the christianity of St. Paul. The Jewish tradition preserved these mysterious pages without paying much attention to them. St. Paul drew a religion from them which was adopted by St. Augustin, Calvin and by Protestantism generally, and which certainly has something in it, seeing that many very eminent thinkers of our own century are still devoted to it. The plan of redemption,

* Genesis, ch. xxiv. v. 7, 12, 14, 26, 27, 50; ch. xxvi. v. 8 (Isaac and Rebecca). Consult the commentaries of St. François de Sales upon the caresses of this "chaste married couple."

† I think that this last verse is written by the Iahveist, but I admit with Wellhausen, that אביו has been corrected into אמו.

‡ Genesis, ch. xx. v. 7; ch. xxvi. v. 10.

§ Ibid. ch. ii. and iii.; ch. v. v. 29; ch. viii. v. 21, 22.

which is a result of the dogma of sin, was very clearly indicated by our author. The salvation of the world would be worked out through the election of Israel, in fulfilment of God's promises to Abraham. Christianity found its first principle here. It asserts that Jesus, the descendant of Israel, has carried out the divine programme and repaired the evil produced by the sin of the first Adam. The Iahveist author was a prophet, and he was surely the greatest of the prophets. We may say that he was the doctrinaire of prophetism, so far that he recapitulated and explained the principles which the prophets alone applied. His mental attitude resembles that of the prophets; there is perpetual disapprobation towards men, yet it is mingled with much pity. We thus find his writings continually referred to in the pages which remain to us of the prophets. It might be said that on the day when the author finished his work a book was born, or rather, that that day saw the birth of Judaism, Christianity and Islamism. The old monotheistic instincts of the Semitic nomads succeeded, under the incomparable power of this iron pen, in forming themselves into a clearly defined and authoritative religion. The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel is the only translation worthy of these admirable pages. Michael Angelo is the only artist who could interpret the Iahveist, for he is truly his brother in genius.

I have insisted several times upon the similarities which may be noticed between the Iahveist work and

the most ancient legends of Elijah.* It leads one to believe that both children were born of the same mother and nurtured on the same breast. I believe that the Iahveist author formed part of the school of Elijah and wrote his book about 850, during the reign of Jehu.

How is it that the date of such a work can be so uncertain? How is it that the name of the man who wrote this masterpiece is unknown? The same question is asked of the Homeric poems, of nearly all the great epics, of the Gospels, and, in fact, of all the great works which have been produced from popular traditions. The compilation of the Gospels was certainly an important event in the history of Christianity, though at the time when these short books appeared they were unnoticed in the centre of Christianity. Books of this kind are of no value to the first generation, which is well acquainted with the original traditions.† They acquire immense importance as soon as the direct tradition is lost and when written accounts are the only evidence of the past. That is why this description of narrative is rarely unique. We have just seen how the traditional history of the North attained a definite form. We shall soon see how the question of ancient histories shaped itself in Jerusalem.

* Notice particularly the sacrifice of Moses (Exodus, ch. xxiv. v. 4–8) compared with that of Elijah (1 Kings, ch. xviii. v. 31 and following), and the vision, Exodus, ch. xxxiii. v. 17, 23. (See above, pp. 237–239 and p. 255.)

† Passage by Papias, frequently quoted.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT (ALLIANCE).

THE idea of God as a legislator is common to all antiquity. Humanity in these simple realistic ages could not imagine a moral law except as the command of a superior being. It regarded the voice of conscience as a voice from heaven. The profound religious movement which took place in the kingdom of Israel in the ninth century B.C. resolved itself into the resolute assertion that Iahveh is a just God, who loves righteousness and expects man to conform to peremptory rules of law. The almost immediate corollary of such a conception was a code supposed to have emanated from Iahveh and claiming to be the expression of his will. There is no doubt that the writer conventionally called "the Iahveist," in undertaking the compilation of his sacred History, had as his chief object the insertion in the sacred records of a code which would be an abridged summary of the precepts of Iahveh. Moses was reputed to have been the medium of these divine communications, the supreme legislator. Had Moses already this character

in the anterior books, particularly in the Book of the Wars of Iahveh? This is doubtful. It was natural that the chieftain who led the people out of Egypt in the name of Iahveh should become the interpreter of Iahveh's covenant with his people. But even this idea of a moral covenant between the liberating god and the tribe he had delivered implies immense moral progress, which must probably be ascribed to the great school of the prophets Elijah and Elisha.

It is, above all, by the manner in which the first author of the sacred History settled the outlines of the so-called Mosaic legislation that he secured a special place for himself in the evolution of Israel. His book supplies the framework of all later developments of the Thora. The Deuteronomist only imitated him; the judicial pandects which were the result of the religious labour that led to, accompanied and followed the restoration of the Temple of Jerusalem, only copied it and commented upon it.

According to the Iahveist writer, this revelation took place in the vast mass of rocky and metalliferous mountains which are to be seen in the Arabian peninsula, six or seven days' journey towards the south after leaving the isthmus.* An awful storm raged over the mountain-tops, the trembling people remained some little way off, and Moses alone went up into the darkness where God was to be found.

* Exodus, ch. xix., xx. v. 18 and following.

He brought back with him the following commands:*

An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy *oloth* and thy *selamim*,† thy sheep and thine oxen. In every place where I record my name ‡ I will come unto thee and I will bless thee. And if thou make me an altar of stone, thou shall not build it of hewn stones; for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar,§ that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

The priest raised above the crowd on an elevated altar, was an offence to these still nomad and patriarchal tribes. A very material argument was urged against the altars being raised upon steps, namely, that the priest might be too much exposed to the view of the people.‖ Steps were ordered at Jerusalem,¶ and the priests wore linen drawers.**

After this summary of the worship of Iahveh, as it was understood by the tribes of the North, came

* Exodus, ch. xx. v. 24 and following to ch. xxiii. v. 19. Verses 22 and 23 are taken from more recent codes. The thirty-fourth chapter of Exodus is a later repetition which the old writer was unwilling to omit.

† Names of particular forms of sacrifices.

‡ The old places of worship were designated by Iahveh, who linked his name with them by some manifestation. Here we get a glimpse of the opposition to the single Temple at Jerusalem.

§ It is noticeable that the priests are not distinct from the people.

‖ Compare Aulus Gellius, x. 15; Servius ad Æn., iv. 646.

¶ Exodus, ch. xxvii. v. 1; Leviticus, ch. ix. v. 22 (texts referring to the second Temple).

** Exodus, ch. xxviii. v. 42 and following.

a short code, at once civil, criminal, moral and religious, which was certainly at the time it was drawn up the most humane and just law which had yet been written. I say advisedly "that had yet been written," for, as a matter of fact, these laws had not, at the time of their publication, any executive force; they had not been sanctioned by public authority. The prophets, although exercising great moral influence, had no legislative power. They were, therefore, ideal laws, utopias, if the term be preferred. It was a perfect code according to the views of a Iahveist sage of the ninth century B.C. Slavery, in the eyes of the author, was the first thing that required legislation.

If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he come in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he be married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master give him a wife, and she bear him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's and he shall go out by himself. But, if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him unto God,* and shall bring him to the door, or unto the door post; † and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; ‡ and he shall serve him for ever.

And if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall

* Ha-Elohim (the judges) appears to indicate a remnant of polytheism. In any case, this refers to the local temple where Iahveh delivered his oracles and received vows.

† The door of the temple perhaps. I think, however, that this refers rather to the door of the master's house.

‡ Ear-piercing was the sign of slavery among many Eastern peoples; ear-rings for a man often bore the same signification.

not go out as the menservants do. If she please not her master, who hath espoused her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange people he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. And if he espouse her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. And if he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. And if he do not these three unto her, then shall she go out for nothing, without money.

He that smiteth a man so that he die, shall be surely put to death. And if a man lie not in wait, but *Ha-Elohim* deliver him into his hand;* then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee.† And if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.

And he that smiteth his father or his mother, shall be surely put to death. And he that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand he shall surely be put to death. And he that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

And if men contend, and one smiteth the other with a stone or with his fist, and he die not, but keep his bed: if he rise again and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit: only he shall pay for the loss of his time and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed.

And if a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall surely be punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money.

And if men strive together and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely fined, according as the woman's husband shall lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if any mischief follow, then shall thou give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning,

---

* This refers to accidental homicide, an accident being always regarded as the realisation of a divine decree. In this case the victim is the real culprit.

† Places of refuge not distinct from places of worship.

wound for wound, stripe for stripe. And if a man smite the eye of his servant or the eye of his maid, and destroy it; he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. And if he smite out his manservant's tooth, or his maidservant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake.

And if an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die, then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. But if the ox were wont to gore in time past and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death. If there be laid on him a ransom, then he shall give for the redemption of his life, whatsoever is laid upon him. Whether he have gored a son or have gored a daughter, according to this judgement shall it be done unto him. If the ox gore a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.*

And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein, the owner of the pit shall make it good; he shall give money unto the owner of them, and the dead beast shall be his. And if one man's ox hurt another's that he die; then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the price of it, and the dead also shall they divide. Or if it be known that the ox was wont to gore in time past and his owner hath not kept him in, he shall surely pay ox for ox and the dead beast shall be his own.

If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall pay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. If the thief be found breaking in and be smitten that he die, there shall be no blood guiltiness for him. If the sun be risen upon him there shall be blood guiltiness for him: he should make full restitution: if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft be found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass or sheep, he shall pay double.

If a man shall cause a field or a vineyard to be eaten, and shall let his beast loose and it feed in another man's field; of the best

---

* This was the price of a slave. Zechariah, ch. xi. v. 12. Eighth century B.C.

of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution.*

If fire break out and catch in thorns, so that the shocks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.

If a man shall deliver unto his neighbour money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found he shall pay double. If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall come near unto the *Ha-Elohim* to see whether he have put his hand unto his neighbour's goods. For every matter of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment or for any manner of lost thing whereof one saith, This is it, the cause of both parties shall come before the *Ha-Elohim;* he whom the *Ha-Elohim* shall condemn,† shall pay double unto his neighbour. If a man deliver unto his neighbour an ass, or an ox or a sheep, or any other beast to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it: then the oath of Iahveh shall be between them both, whether he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods; and the owner thereof shall accept it and he shall not make restitution. But if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof. If it be torn in pieces, let him bring it for witness; and he shall not make good that which was torn. .

And if a man borrow aught of his neighbour, and it be hurt or die, the owner thereof being not with it, he shall surely make restitution. If the owner thereof be with it, he shall not make it good: if it be an hired thing, it came for its hire.‡

And if a man entice a virgin that is not betrothed and lie with her, he shall surely pay a dowry for her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.

---

* The Greek and the Samaritan texts are in this case more complete than the Hebrew.

† Origin of the judgment of God. The text seems to be in the plural. "Whom the *Ha-Elohim* shall condemn." But the true expression seems to be ירשיענו (Samaritan) or ירשיע האלהים. The fault נו=ה occurs frequently. Compare ch. xxii. v. 20.

‡ That is to say shall be retained from his hire.

Thou shalt not suffer a sorceress to live.

Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death. He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto Iahveh only, shall be utterly destroyed.*

And a stranger shalt thou not wrong neither shalt thou oppress him, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Ye shall not afflict any widow † or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows and your children fatherless.

If thou lend money to any of my people with thee that is poor, thou shalt not be to him as a creditor, neither shall ye lay upon him usury. If thou at all take thy neighbour's garment to pledge, thou shalt restore it unto him by that the sun goeth down: ‡ for that is his only covering: it is his garment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious.

Thou shalt not revile God, nor curse a ruler of thy people.

Thou shalt not delay to offer of the abundance of thy fruits, and of thy liquors. The first born of thy sons shall thou give unto me. § Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen and with thy sheep: seven days it shall be with its dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me.

And ye shall be holy men unto me: || therefore ye shall not eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the

---

* Outcast from the law, condemned to certain death.

† Read תענם.

‡ Compare Amos, ch. ii. v. 8.

§ Assuredly with a ransom. This offering of the first-born, a remnant of primitive molochism, had been reduced, mainly by the progress of prophetism, to an inoffensive rite. The Elohist passage, Exodus, ch. xiii. v. 2, does not admit any equivocation (see 2 Kings, ch. xii. v. 5). The Levitical code (Numbers, ch. xviii v. 15 and following) is still more softened. Micah, ch. vi. v. 7, is still more embarrassing.

|| Holiness here refers to external purity, consisting in the avoidance of anything unclean.

dogs. Thou shalt not take up a false report:* nor put thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause, to turn aside after a multitude to wrest judgement: neither shalt thou favour a poor man in his cause.†

If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee fallen under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.‡

Thou shalt not wrest the judgement of thy poor § in his cause. Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked. And thou shalt take no gift: for a gift blindeth them that have sight, and perverteth the words of the righteous. And a stranger shalt thou not oppress, for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

And six years thou shalt sow thy land and shall gather in the increase thereof: but the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie fallow; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave, the beast of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard and with thine oliveyard.

Six days thou shalt do thy work and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may have rest and the son of thine handmaid and the stranger may be refreshed.

And in all things that I have said unto you take ye heed. and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.

Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep: seven days thou

---

* Compare Psalm xv., which resembles an abridged Thora.

† Read גדל, instead of ודל. Compare Leviticus, ch. xix. v. 15, where there is an effort to retain the two lessons and to give a meaning to דל.

‡ To be corrected by Deuteronomy, ch. xxii. v. 4. תקם may have become מעזב (the *qoph* has often given rise to the two letters). מעזב perhaps for מהם.

§ These laws are addressed to all Israel as a nation.

shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee,* at the time appointed in the month Abib, for in it thou camest out from Egypt, and none shall appear before me empty: and the feast of harvest, and the first fruits of thy labours which thou sowest in the field: and the feast of ingathering at the end of the year,† when thou gatherest in thy labours out of the field. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord Iahveh.

Thou shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread; neither shall the fat of my feast remain all night until the morning.

The first of the first fruits of thy ground, thou shalt bring unto the house of Iahveh thy God.‡ Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.§

So runs the first Thora, simple and as yet unpolished, but none the less containing all the civilising principles which are attributed to Moses. Iahveh is the sole God of Israel; by sacrificing to any other god, the Israelite became outcast from his nation, and exposed himself to the penalty of death. With that exception, religion had become imbued with a spirit of humanity and gentleness. Iahveh is righteous and merciful, the protector of the feeble; men please him by goodness, and he punishes them for injustice and cruelty. The basis of the covenant between Iahveh and Israel is thus entirely moral.

* Exodus, ch. xxi., now a combination of the Iahveist and Elohist.

† For the various ways of commencing the new year among the Hebrews, consult Dillmann, *Exodus*, p. 248.

‡ Silo or Bethel. Israel had its temple, less developed than that of Jerusalem. See above, p. 157 and following.

§ It was thought cruel to cook the poor little creature in the milk that should have served to feed it.

The nation is truly God's people, it is destined to create the true religion in the world.

And Moses came* and told the people all the words of Iahveh, and all the judgements: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which Iahveh hath spoken will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of Iahveh, and rose up early in the morning and builded an altar under the mount, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel,† which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto Iahveh. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the *Book of the Covenant* and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that Iahveh hath spoken will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which Iahveh hath made with you concerning all these words.

It would, as I have already said, be a great error to imagine that these texts had any legal value, when first written. Unless they enunciated an existing common law, these codes, although supposed to be revealed to Moses on Sinai or Horeb, were merely the personal theories of the prophet, the idealistic description of what he conceived to be a perfect state of society. The code of Manou, in India, was, in like manner, originally a purely artificial one, responding to the ideal of a certain school of Brahmins, and not in any sense a legislation confirmed by any public authority.

For instance, we cannot regard the attempt made

* Exodus, ch. xxiv. v. 3 and following.

† Notice the absence of priests.

by the Iahveist writer to apply the principle of a weekly sabbath to the years as anything but the creation of an advanced utopist. Full of the idea of the sabbath, which he considers a merciful institution, an intervention of God in favour of the weak, he applies it far beyond what the tradition of pious men had already sanctioned. He is desirous that slavery should cease in the seventh year, and even that the earth should keep its sabbath; and since, in his opinion, the poverty of some was produced by the wealth of others, he fancies that this sabbath of the land will be much to the advantage of the poor. This law was certainly never applied; the idea that such an institution would be good for the poor implies a very naïve form of political economy. The precepts upon loans and wages are inspired rather by a sentiment of humanity than by any legal spirit.* These passages resemble many that are found in the Gospels, meaningless if converted into articles of a code, excellent if regarded merely as the hyperbolic expression of highly moral sentiments.

At a later date, the humanitarian paradoxes of the prophet were still further exaggerated. The canonists of the second Temple were anxious that the Sabbatical year should fall at the same time throughout the nation, a device which would have

* The perfect contrast to this is the juridical inflexibility of the Romans, in whose eyes the law solely represents absolute justice, without any semblance of pity.

produced a periodical famine. Their invention of the year of Jubilee completed the cycle of utopias which had rendered the Thora the most fertile of social books and the most unpractical of codes. The error of writers on comparative legislation who draw a parallel between the laws of the Pentateuch and those of other nations lies in ignoring the fundamental point, that the laws of the Pentateuch are not real laws, laws made by legislators or sovereigns that have been promulgated, known by the people and applied by judges, but the dreams of ardent reformers, the aspirations of pietists which remained unapplied in the State during their own age, and which were only really observed when the Jewish State no longer existed, and from which was to evolve not a complete society, a *polis*, but an *ecclesia*, a religious and moral society, living according to its internal rules, under the protection of a secular and strongly organised government.

The *Book of the Covenant* was, in fact, the father of all the Hebrew codes which followed it. If it has not been adopted like the *Decalogue* as the moral law for the whole of humanity, it is because it belongs too decidedly to the northern kingdom and includes a considerable amount of civil legislation, without any marked characteristics.

The Decalogue belongs to the Jerusalemite edition called Elohist. This edition, which gave the world the account commencing with, "In the beginning God

created the heaven and earth," provided the religious conscience of the human race with a still more essential element, a short legislation of an exclusively moral character, suitable to every race, expressed in that concise and, if I may so call it, gnarled form for which the old Hebrew language possesses a special gift.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE JERUSALEM ACCOUNT, CALLED THE ELOHIST.

I HAVE more than once had occasion to remark that the religious movement was more quiet and slower at Jerusalem than in the kingdom of Israel. The need of collecting the traditions was less felt there, and no work resembling the Book of the Legends of Israel or the Book of the Wars of Iahveh existed there. These books, the exclusive property of the North, had, in all probability, not got as far as Jerusalem. The rivalry between the two countries prevented any literary intercourse, and it must be added that the number of copies of a book were so limited at that time that every book was in a measure linked to the country which had produced it. I believe that the compilation of the Iahveist sacred history was not known in Jerusalem before the last century of the kingdom of Israel. Oral instruction sufficed. There was, however, a feeling that the time for editing this kind of document had arrived; it was probably known that Israel was more advanced in this respect, that it had accomplished its historical task, had reduced

its recollections to order, and had embodied them in a permanent form.

The two kingdoms had a great number of mutual traditions which dated long before their separation under Rehoboam. Jerusalem, moreover, possessed documents which were unknown in the North. A great deal had been written during the reigns of David and Solomon. Besides the authentic and contemporary accounts of David and his *gibborim*, besides the lists and annals of the *mazkirim*, there were also *toledoth*, or genealogies, which had been committed to writing at a very early date, and historical or geographical documents, like the tenth and perhaps the fourteenth chapters of Genesis. The idea of compiling a complete history with the aid of these traditions and documents then suggested itself.* It will not be far wrong to

* This is the document which the Germans designate by the letter A. These eminent critics have, they think, observed that the prophets anterior to the Captivity and the Deuteronomist were only acquainted with the Iahveist narrative, and upon this belief one objection against the antiquity of this document has been founded (Reuss, *Intr.*, pp. 188–189, 190–191). This assertion is too positive. The "forty years" of Amos, ch. ii. v. 10, ch. v. v. 25, appears to be of Elohist origin (Dillmann, *Numbers*, p. 79, second edition). The Decalogue, which the Deuteronomist borrows from a more ancient version, appears to have formed part of the primitive Elohist. See below, p. 334 and following. Ezekiel was acquainted with the tenth chapter of Genesis, which was not in the Iahveist document. The second Isaiah (ch. liv. v. 9) quotes Genesis, ch. ix. v. 11 (Eloh.). The seventeenth chapter of Genesis is Elohist, the sixth and sixteenth verses contain one essentially Jerusalemite feature, and this chapter is certainly anterior to

place the date of this work at about 825 or 800 years B.C.*

The work produced by the Jerusalemite author was shorter than that of the North. Its character was more simple, less mythological and eccentric. A number of strange details which the Israelite editor had found in the Book of Legends are omitted here. The actions attributed to God were much more reserved, the anthropomorphism less ingenuous, and the reader can feel that the author was afraid of compromising the divine majesty by crediting it with purely human passions, not to say failings. The author had, moreover, another curious scruple. By another after-thought of local colour, analogous to that to be observed in the Book of Job, he was unwilling to designate God by the name of Iahveh, until the time when that name was reputed to have been promulgated and explained

the Captivity. In it circumcision is represented as the sign of the covenant; after the Captivity the sign would have been adhesion to a *Thora*.

* The first prophets whose writings have been preserved (about 800 B.C.) appear to have been acquainted with the Iahveist narrative. These prophets, although alluding to Israel rather than Judah, had certainly some connection with Jerusalem. If the Elohist author had written towards 800, he would have known the Iahveist writings as well as his contemporaries, and would have paid some attention to them. Now the Elohist does not seem to have noticed the Iahveist narrative at all in his own work. There are pericopes (extracts) it is true, in the history of Moses, where the author appears to be recapitulating the Iahveist; but these pericopes may have belonged to a much more modern life of Moses, not to the primitive Elohist.

to Moses.* This aimless peculiarity was the origin of the name of *Elohist* which so came into general use.

It is with his opening page that this writer has marked his place with letters of gold in the history of religion, and, though with letters less luminous, in the history of science and of the human mind. The final editor of the sacred History has given the preference, for the history of the creation, to the Jerusalemite preface over that of the Iahveist, doubtless because he found it more strikingly simple and dignified. Thus we have had handed down to us the marvellous narrative which runs:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good, and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so, and God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

And God said: Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

---

* Exodus, ch. xii. The Iahveist himself avoids using the name of Iahveh when quoting the words of those who would not be likely to have used it.

And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth put forth grass, herb yielding seed, and fruit tree bearing fruit after its kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, herb yielding seed after its kind and tree bearing fruit, wherein is the seed thereof, after its kind: and God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and for years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and let fowl fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created the great sea monsters, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kinds, and every winged fowl after its kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let the fowl multiply in the earth. And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after its kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after its kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the ground after its kind: and God saw that it was good.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. And God created man in his own image, in the image

of God created he him; male and female created he them.* And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat: and to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

And the heaven and the earth were finished and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day, from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his work, which God had created and made. These are the generations of the heaven and of the earth when they were created.

The essential differences which distinguish the Jerusalemite cosmogony from that of the North are easily perceived. In spite of the mutilated condition in which the latter has reached us, it is safe to assert that the creation was represented therein as not the work of six days, but of one;† that it described the creation of man as taking place at a time when the earth was entirely barren, devoid of all vegetation and all life, the creation of animals

* That is to say, he created males and females, thus contradicting the Iahveist account. Notice the collective plural ירדו, v. 26, compare v. 2. Adam became an individual in ch. v. v. 3. But all this portion of the Elohist is incoherent (v. 1–3), the reader recognises the piecing of the compiler.

† Genesis, ch. ii. v. 4. ביום.

as being accomplished after that of man; man as being created male and single, and afterwards the woman being drawn from the man; while according to the Jerusalemite account, men were created in an indefinite number like the animals, some males and others females.* The story of Paradise and the Fall was evidently missing in the Jerusalemite narrative, for the closing phrase: "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when they were created," was immediately followed by the words: "This is the book of the generations of Adam." (Genesis, ch. v.)

If it be true that the northern writer, by his account of Paradise and the Fall, was the founder of the philosophy of sin and Christianity according to St. Paul's doctrine, it may be said that the Jerusalemite writer created by his opening chapter the sacred physics which are necessary to some mental conditions, in which the believer wishes to be only half absurd. This page cleared the sky, and drove from it the monsters, the mythological clouds and all the chimeras of the ancient cosmogonies. It responded to that paltry rationalism which thinks it has the right to laugh at the weak, because it admits the smallest possible amount of the supernatural; moreover it has perceptibly hampered the progress of true reason, founded on science. The opposition which scholastic Christianity has displayed, from the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries, to all

* The idea of a pair is not found in the Elohist cosmogony.

healthy scientific methods, has chiefly arisen from this, in some respects, fatal chapter, which renders the search for natural laws almost useless. Better by far unadulterated mythology than relative good sense, when the latter comes to be regarded as inspired. The cosmogonies of Hesiod are farther from the truth than the first portion of the Elohist; but they certainly have not led to so much nonsense being talked. No one has been persecuted in the name of Hesiod, and no absurdities have been accumulated to discover in his works the final truths of geology.

The truth is that the beautiful chapter with which Genesis opens is neither learned in the sense of modern science, nor ingenuous in the fashion of the pagan cosmogonies. It is childish science; a first attempt to explain the beginning of the world, implying a very correct notion of the successive developments of the universe. Every detail invites us to seek for the origin of this cosmogonic theory at Babylon, for what characterised Babylonian science was the attempt to explain the universe by physical principles. Spontaneous generation and the progressive transformation of species were always subjects of discussion there.* The idea of a scale of beings from the vegetable to man then naturally presented itself to the mind. The number seven had long

* Berosius, Sanchoniathon, *Agriculture Nabatéenne*, Arab memoirs on the Sabiens and the Harraniens, in Chwolson, *Die Ssabier*. Consult Memoirs on Sanchoniathon and Nabatean Agriculture in the *Memoires de l'Acad. des Inscr. et B. L.*, vol. xxiii., second part; vol. xxiv., first part.

been regarded as sacramental at Babylon, and the seven stages in the work of the creation was a self-evident proposition. Such an idea had the further advantage of explaining the sabbath by the rest on the seventh day. At Babylon and Harran the cosmogonic history was no doubt blended with mythological details which would offend a sober mind. The clear simplicity of the Hebrew mind and the sublimity of the Hebraic narrative suppressed these exuberances and rendered this opening chapter a masterpiece of the art required by certain subjects, of being at the same time lucid yet mysterious.

The ideas of the Jerusalemite author upon primitive humanity are much more simple than those of the Israelitish writer.* He knows neither Eve nor Abel. Adam has only one known son, that is Seth. From Seth to Noah, there are ten generations of long-lived patriarchs, Enos,† Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah. It will be noticed that the names of the Sethite patriarchs are almost identical with those of the Cainites in the legend of the North, Mahalaleel‡ and Lamech appear in both lists;

* We cannot speak with certainty upon the omissions from the Elohist, for the compiler has included almost every portion of the first pages. As far as Abraham, we have the complete book; and even after that, the parts suppressed were inconsiderable.

† *Enos*, a synonym of *Adam*, is probably a remnant of a cosmogonic version, where man was called אנש.

‡ The reading מחייאל appears defective. The Greek is Μαιαλαλεηλ. The two *iod* are derived from two *lamed*, of which the handle rising into a space between the two lines, has now disappeared

Methuselah and Metusael scarcely differ. Enoch, elsewhere the son of Cain, is here a holy man who walks with God and whom the *Elohim* receive into heaven with them. It is supposed, and not without plausibility, that these Sethites of the Jerusalemite writer, or Cainites of the northern writer, are the ten mythical kings who, in the Chaldean system, fill the interval between the creation and the deluge. There is even a curious similarity between the number of years of the Sethite patriarchs and the duration of the reign of the Chaldean kings.*

The account of the deluge is very similar in both editions of the sacred History, and it also very closely resembles the Chaldean prototype, which has been discovered in our time. It is the end only which differs perceptibly in the two biblical narratives. The sacrifice which the northern writer places after the deluge is not mentioned in the southern account. The Jerusalem author seeks to connect the fundamental principles of morality and the law with the great events of history. Just as he connects the institution of the sabbath with the creation, so he links with the deluge the formation of a covenant between God and humanity, accompanied by its precepts (later on called the Noahic precepts). Animal food, which the author, himself a decided vegetarian,†

* Oppert in the *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne,* February, 1887; also in *La Chronol. de la Genèse*, Paris, 1878.

† Genesis, ch. i. v. 29; ch. ix. v. 3. This is why he omits the sacrifice after the deluge; he knew nothing of the sacrifice of Cain and the raiment made of skins.

supposes to have been forbidden to man until that time, is now allowed. The precepts contain a horror of murder, and a prohibition to eat flesh with the life (*i.e.* the blood) in it, the rainbow being the sign of the new covenant.

The liking of the Jerusalemite author for genealogies, or rather the wealth of documents of this kind which he found at Jerusalem, caused him to insert that valuable table of races of the world* springing from the three sons of Noah, which may be counted amongst the most precious documents we possess as to the remote ages. Tyre is spoken of in it as not at all differing from Sidon. The Persians have not appeared on the world's stage. The knowledge displayed about Syria, Arabia, Egypt, and of the Cushite countries is striking. Armenia, Asia Minor, and the shores of the Oriental half of the Mediterranean are depicted with tolerable perspicacity. On the other hand, a kind of wall seems to limit the author's vision eastward. The Iranian population, and as a consequence the Indian peoples still more, are unknown to him.

Of Noah's three sons, Shem alone excites the writer's interest, and in Shem's family, the special stem of the Hebrews. Arphaxad, Salah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor and Terah are the steps (chiefly geographical) which lead him to Abraham. The group of Abraham, Nahor, Haran, Sarai, Milcah, Iscah and Lot fluctuate curiously around Ur-Casdim

* Genesis, ch. x.

and Harran. We then come to the land of Canaan. The separation of Abraham and Lot and the birth of Ishmael are the prelude to God's covenant with Abraham. This new covenant has a new commandment as a sign, circumcision on the eighth day.* This rite became a peremptory law, an uncircumcised man could not belong to the race of Abraham. Slaves and strangers living among the Israelites were also subject to it. This account is followed by the stories of Sarah, Hagar, Isaac and Ishmael, the narrative of the cave of Macphela, and the genealogies of the Arabs, who were connected with Abraham through Keturah and Hagar.†

The legends of Isaac and Jacob were treated by the Elohist much more from a genealogical point of view than with the rich picturesque details which form the charm of the Bible of the North. The author seeks to link the populations on the borders of Palestine, particularly Edom, with the family of Abraham. A short history of Edom is no doubt borrowed from the oldest written documents of the Semitic peoples.‡ The covenant with Abraham is renewed with Isaac and Jacob. As the scene of the patriarchal history,

* Genesis, ch. xvii. † Ibid. ch. xxxvi.

‡ The Elohist gives special details about Ishmael and the Arabs. According to him, Ishmael never left the clan of Abraham. Genesis, ch. iii. v. 15, 16; ch. xvii.; ch. xxi. v. 2–5; ch. xxv. v. 9. The history of Ishmael is one of the rare cases in which all the three versions have been preserved. The compiler, in joining them together, without taking much trouble to harmonise them, has made up a most improbable story.

the author ignores Beersheba, so dear to the tribes of the North ; and of the grove of Mamre the Amorrean, he makes a city of Mamre, which he identifies with Hebron.* In the Jerusalem version, the history of Joseph was not embellished with the charming details which attract the childlike imagination of the shepherds of Shechem and Dothaim.

In the narratives relating to Moses, the Jerusalemite author only differs in a few details from the Israelitish account. He seems to have been much less inclined to amplify. Like his fellow-worker in the north, but without any agreement with him, he regarded the apparition on Sinai as the final and definite alliance made between God and the elect people. The Passover was the great memorial of these miraculous events ; now the Passover, in our author's eyes, implied circumcision and the consecration of the first-born.† The canticle following upon the passage of the Red Sea would seem to have belonged to the Jerusalemite narrative.‡ It is a brilliant poem, a little commonplace in rhetoric, formed upon the model of ancient ballads, in which one recognises the artificial and imitative style of the composition.

Thus the Elohist dealt with the same subjects as the Iahveist writer, but he treated them according to his own views, utilising the precious genealogical

* Genesis, ch. xxiii. ; see Dillmann.

† Exodus, ch. xii. v. 43–52, and the whole of ch. xiii.

‡ Ibid. ch. xv. ; notice the verses 16, 17, which are essentially Jerusalemite. Compare Hosea, ch. ii. v. 17.

tables to which he had access,* and indulging his taste for an accuracy more apparent than real in his dates and numbers. The conquest of Joshua, told in very conventional style, served to demonstrate the reality of the promises made to the fathers, and to prove that Iahveh had fulfilled his share of the covenant so well that the people had only to keep theirs. The author writes chiefly with a view to inculcating precepts and religious customs. The book was still far from being a code: it was a history, intended to demonstrate the historical reason for certain laws and to found them on the highest authority. Thus the sabbath was the result of the creation; the horror of blood was proclaimed at the deluge; circumcision, which is not mentioned in the Book of the Covenant, was linked with the covenant made between God and Abraham. The Passover was instituted in reference to the departure from Egypt.

The similarity of method in the two synoptic sacred Histories was due to the resemblance between the oral traditions and a style of education which had existed, for a long time, in both portions of Israel. In the same way, all the Gospels resemble one another, for they all emanated from one and the same oral teaching. But this identity of scheme did not prevent the existence of great differences in the two works. The free poetic spirit and the imagination which characterised the account written in Israel are completely missing in the Elohist narrative. No

* Numbers, ch. i. and following.

concession is made to pleasure; the author seeks to advance a religious cause; he aims at proving his case; he revels in statistics, and tries to establish a chronology. To the conciseness of a geographer he adds the formality of a jurist. His dry, monotonous language is expressed in very few words. All points to a more reflective intellectual condition, more positive, freer from mythological dreams than is the Iahveist, a more simple, a stricter, and an almost deist theology. The rôle of angels as a rule, of the angel of Iahveh in particular, is reduced almost to nothing.

The author appears to have been a priest of the Temple at Jerusalem, having at his disposal the documents which since David's reign had been preserved in the archives there. His work, much less interesting than that of Israel, had also much less publicity.* It scarcely travelled beyond the precincts of the Temple of Jerusalem. The historical text to which the prophets frequently allude is almost invariably the so-called Iahveist.† At the same time it must never be forgotten that written literature had not, at that remote date, the importance which it afterwards acquired. Oral instruction was much more usual than a book. The sacred History of the northern kingdom was restricted to a very small number of copies, while it is probable that only one single copy of the Jeru-

* This is why the Jerusalem Talmud has been much less read and commented upon than that of Babylon.

† See above, pp. 319, 320, notes.

salem version existed until it was included in a larger work. Men read very little at that time; words replaced books, and that is why words assumed such striking forms. They were conceived with the object of impressing the memory and imprinting themselves upon it.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DECALOGUE.

THE Jerusalem, or Elohist, book did not contain a developed Thora any more than did the version called Iahveist. But just as the northern work contained the Book of the Covenant, the Jerusalem document contained what is called the Ten words,* or Decalogue.† The Decalogue is the law of Moses as it was

* Deuteronomy, ch. iv. v. 13; ch. x. v. 4. This rubric did not exist in the Exodus, and this proves that, before 622, the shorter text had been repeated for a long time as a traditional cantilene.

† The primitive text (with certain corrections) in Exodus, ch. xx., and Deuteronomy, ch. v., is a reproduction. Compare Psalm lxxxi. v. 10, 11. The division into ten articles is little justified. The chief Elohist peculiarity of the Decalogue is the connection between the command to rest on the seventh day and the Elohist cosmogony, Genesis, ch. i. Compare the expression עשה מלאכה, Exodus, ch. xx. v. 9, 10; Genesis, ch. ii. v. 2, 3. The idea of written tablets, which appears peculiar to the Elohist, Exodus, ch. xxxi. v. 18, ch. xxxiv. v. 29 and following (compare ch. xxv. v. 16, 21; ch. xl. v. 29), implies the existence of brief summaries of the law in the style of the Decalogue. But it is difficult, in Exodus, to distinguish the ancient Elohist from the more modern Levitical additions.

summed up in Jerusalem.* The summary is short, and the author was right in making it so, for he had previously announced his most important precepts on every solemn occasion, and, in some measure, had founded his morality in his history. Elohim, in his account, only speaks to command. His first phrase† is the greatest, the holiest and the most evident of the commandments of God, or, to put it in another way, of nature. PEROU OU-REBOU, "Be fruitful and multiply."

The Decalogue and the Book of the Covenant were written separately without any mutual arrangement. The points of resemblance found in the two works are the result of the common traditional history from which the two authors have compiled them. In all respects, moreover, the formulas of the Decalogue are more matured, more analytical, and clearer.

And God spake all these words saying:

I am Iahveh, thy God,‡ which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

---

* Hosea, ch. xiii. v. 4, strongly reminds one of the Decalogue. It is certain that, about the year 800, short Thoras, at least oral, were used at Jerusalem (Amos, ch. ii. v. 4); it is even probable that sometimes these short texts were written. An allusion to many editions of the Thora may be seen in Hosea, ch. viii. v. 12. However, see below, p. 402, note ||.

† Genesis, ch. i. v. 28.

‡ It must be remembered that after the revelation of the name of Iahveh, the so-called Elohist uses it as freely as the Iahveist.

thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I, Iahveh, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of Iahveh thy God in vain; for Iahveh will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Iahveh thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days Iahveh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Iahveh blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which Iahveh thy God giveth thee.

Thou shalt do no murder.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's.

Thus we see that the religious progress which characterised the *Book of the Covenant* is still more perceptible in the smaller Thora, in the ten articles drawn up by the sages of Jerusalem. The conditions of Iahveh's covenant with his people are exclusively moral; he recompenses them with prosperity in this world, giving it to those who please him, and the man who pleases him must be irreproachable. In order to enjoy a long life and to be happy, a man must avoid evil. The great step is taken. The old religions in which the god granted

his blessings to those who offered him the finest sacrifices and who most carefully observed the ritual of his worship, were quite left behind. The *Book of the Alliance* had already inaugurated ideas of the same order in the northern kingdom, but the *Decalogue* is superior in regard to clearness. The extraordinary good fortune which has made these laws the code of universal morality was not unmerited.

The *Decalogue*, in fact, indicated the return ot Israel to a pure worship, to the monotheism which is to be discerned in the beginnings of the patriarchal life, and from which the people had deviated by adopting a national god. Iahveh and Elohim are henceforth identical. Iahveh is not only the God of Israel, he is the God of heaven, of earth, and of the human race. He loves righteousness, and commands men to fulfil it. He is the true God Thus Israel succeeded in extracting the truth from all that tended to negative it. Progress in religion may be made in two ways, either by directly attacking a bad creed and destroying or suppressing unworthy gods, or by improving the special god without changing his name, by gradually raising him to the type of the universal God. The moral aristocracy of Israel was so profoundly penetrated by monotheistic ideas that it succeeded in rendering Iahveh the absolute God. This fatal name of Iahveh it at last suppressed by declaring it unpronounceable. Such good fortune never attended Chemosh of the

Moabites, Rimmon of the Ammonites, Salm of the Arabs, nor even Baal or Milik.

The Temple of Jerusalem, which appeared to be the greatest misfortune from a purely Elohist point of view, thus in the end helped the development of the religious idea. The *Decalogue* was probably written in the chambers which surrounded the Temple. Several times in the history of Israel, we find it adopting the ideas which it had at first hated, and making elements which appeared the most opposed to its work contribute to its advancement.* Even Iahveh was moulded by this iron genius. An idol, a false god if ever there was one, has become, through the steady action of an intense volition, the only true God whom men serve by righteousness, and whom they honour by purity of heart. The "ten words" of Iahveh are suitable for every nation, and will be during all succeeding ages the "Commandments of God."

Thus, from about the year 825 B.C., Israel had completed its masterpiece, its *Thora*, which was, however, still free from all ritualism. Is it not possible that, among other peoples of antiquity, a moral code may have existed which might be compared to the Book of the Covenant and the Decalogue? No one can say. But the unparalleled good fortune which has attended these formulæ arose from the determined obedience with which Israel has followed them. The Bible of the ninth

* See above, p. 120.

century was double as to the letter, but single in spirit. The same gentle, kindly feeling, the same love of a peaceful life, pervades both the histories.* The exquisite idylls of the Iahveist, full of noble imagery, resembled a morality play in which horror of violence and an antipathy for the savage man was expressed under every form.† The school which had created the twin books never came to an end. Ardent zealots continued, during many centuries, to inculcate the same doctrine of a righteous Iahveh, the protector of the right, the defender of the weak, the destroyer of the rich, the enemy of worldly civilisations, the friend of patriarchal simplicity. The prophets were indefatigable propagators of this ideal. The Jewish Book of the Beginnings is, at the present time, printed in millions of copies. But it never proved a more powerful lever than at the remote date when, scarcely established in its definite form, it maintained in a few ardent souls the sacred fire of justice, of moral discipline and of religious puritanism.

* See, for instance, the two fine narratives Genesis, ch. xxiii. and xxiv., the one Elohist, the other Iahveist. The charming Book of *Ruth* contains the same picture of kindly and gentle habits.

† See Genesis, ch. xxv. v. 27 and following, full of suggestions of exquisite nicety.

CHAPTER XV.

MATERIAL DECLINE.

While Israel was preparing the foundation of its religious supremacy, its position in the world was gradually diminishing. The prophetic spirit and the institutions which arose from it, at least virtually, prohibited commercial and industrial development. The house of Omri represented the last attempt to give the worldly position of the kingdom of the North some brilliancy and strength. Politics were ended; the prophets had destroyed all reason for them; the military courage that distinguished Omri, Ahab, Jehoram and Ahaziah had lost its value. Saints and heroes represent opposite sides of human nature and they rarely agree together.

Jehu, who had ascended the throne through a defeat which his nation had sustained from the Syrians and Damascenes, was unable to arrest this national decadence during his reign, which lasted twenty-eight years. Hazael retained a decided superiority on the eastern frontier. The whole of the trans-Jordan provinces were lost to Israel for the

moment. The tribes of Gad and Reuben, and the oriental half tribe of Manasseh, with the land of Gilead and Bashan, passed into the hands of the Damascenes.* Damascus had become what the Philistines had formerly been, the scourge of Israel, the aggressive enemy whom it was necessary to conquer or to cajole.

Upon an Assyrian obelisk,† Shalmaneser II. is represented receiving the homage and a tribute of five nations, and among them appears "Jahua, the son of Himri," who has been identified with Jehu.‡ The tribute consists of bars of gold, bars of silver, cups, vases of various kinds, lead, etc. I believe that for a long time Hebraists will be slow to admit any important Assyrian invasion of the Israelitish territory in the time of Jehu. Some trace of such an important event would have been found in the scanty annals of Judah and Israel, above all in the writings of the prophets which so faithfully reflect the conscience of the people. From the moment when Assyria enters Palestine, the compass of Israel is troubled, and everything vibrates from the contact with this powerful disturbing element. It is difficult to believe that the influence which, from the middle of the eighth century, has been so keenly felt could

* 2 Kings, ch. x. v. 32, 33.

† Schrader, *Die Keilinschr.*, pp. 208–211; Duncker, *Gesch. des Alt.*, ii. p. 200.

‡ Omri was a kind of dynastic title of Israel. See above, p. 208.

have existed a century before, without leaving any trace of its existence. Perhaps by taking the adulations of these inscriptions too literally, we commit the same error that we should if the Chinese assertion that the whole world is tributary to the Emperor were to be received with unquestioning faith, or if the Mussulman declaration that all the sovereigns of the earth are the Sultan's vassals were to be implicitly believed.

Jehoahaz, the successor of Jehu, does not appear to have been fanatical in his views, for during his reign an *astarteion* was again tolerated in Samaria.* But the real history of Israel about this date is very little known.

As I have often observed, there was no religious crisis at Jerusalem in the real sense of the word. Iahveism was perpetuated there, officially and peaceably. In reality, the Temple was a conservative element. Joash of Judah maintained during a long reign † the tradition of the moderate Iahveism of Asa and Jehoshaphat, which, in fact, Athaliah had not interrupted. Joash worshipped Iahveh only, but he had no idea of unity of worship; sacrifices were offered and incense was burnt to Iahveh upon all the high places. The Temple represented the State religion, but it did not suppress other places of adoration any more than the mass celebrated upon

* 2 Kings, ch. xiii. v. 6.

† Ibid. ch. xii. v. 1 and following.

the high altar of Notre Dame interferes with the masses said in the chapels and upon the secondary altars. In short, the Temple was only used by the king and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*

Joash was afterwards accused of the blackest crimes, but this was only the effect of priestly rancour.† For the king, whom legend has made the ward and pupil of the priests, was really an anticlerical sovereign, if such an expression may be allowed. This is what really occurred. Joash watched over the buildings of the Temple very carefully. A hundred and forty years had elapsed since the great edifice was completed, and the necessity for repairs was becoming evident, particularly in the wood and timber work. In these buildings, there was a curious contrast between the great solidity of the walls and the extreme fragility of the decorations. Joash very justly decided that the immense sums of money which flowed into the Temple should be used to keep it in repair. This money was provided from two sources: first, the ransom of men's lives, that is to say, the ransoms of the first-born who belonged to Iahveh, and should, according to a primitive rite, have been sacrificed to him;‡ secondly, from the sums freely offered in fulfilment of vows made to Iahveh. At that date the tariffs used later on by

* This is inferred from 2 Kings, ch. xii. v. 68.

† 2 Chronicles, ch. xxiv. v. 18 and following. Compare 2 Kings, ch. xii.

‡ See above, p. 311, note §.

the Carthaginians did not exist,* and when any one came to the Temple to fulfil his religious duties, he addressed himself to a priest of his acquaintance and they arranged the matter between them, the priest receiving the money and giving no account of it. At first, Joash contented himself with commanding that the necessary repairs should be paid for out of these revenues. But a few years later, nothing having been yet done, Joash addressed some remonstrances to Jehoaida the high priest † and his colleagues, and arranged that in future the priests should not receive money for themselves.

Jehoiada, in order to inaugurate this system, caused a chest to be made, with a hole in the lid, and placed it by the side of the altar of sacrifices, to the right of the entrance to the Temple. The priests who kept the door put all the money brought them into this chest, and when it was known by its weight to contain a large sum, the king's *sofer* and the high priest opened it, counted the money and divided it into bags, each containing a certain amount. The money was then confided to the superintendents of the works that were being carried out, and they spent it in the necessary building repairs, in timber and

* See *Corpus inscr. Semit.*, part i., No. 166 and following.

† This Jehoiada must not be confused with the captain of the guards. It is hence that came the addition of הכהן to the ninth and following verses of the eleventh chapter of the Second Book of Kings. What could be more improbable than to attribute to the restorer of the dynasty the pitiful part that is described here? See above, p. 269, note.

carpenters' work, the purchase of valuable wood and hewn stone. But no regular accounts were kept, and the superintendents were not expected to give any explanation of the use made of the funds. The cause of the abuses was not suppressed, but the priests no longer profited by it. At the time, they only retained the money paid in fines and sin offerings, which was supposed to suffice for their maintenance.

The external state of the two kingdoms was deplorable. The attacks of the Arameans of Damascus were almost periodical. About 830, Hazael, by a victorious campaign, rendered the kingdom of Israel almost subject to him. Jehoahaz saw his army destroyed and his cavalry reduced to fifty men. Having conquered Israel, Hazael entered the territory of Judah, and threatened Jerusalem. Joash of Judah had no means of resisting his advance, so he gave as a ransom to Hazael the riches of the Temple, the offerings which his fathers, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaziah, had dedicated since the invasion of Sheshouk, adding to them all the treasures found in his palace, Hazael thereupon consenting not to march upon Jerusalem.

The kingdom of Israel revived a little during the reign of Joash, who succeeded Jehoahaz.* Benhadad III. had succeeded Hazael, and Joash of Israel, who seems to have been courageous, dreamed only of revenge. According to a frag-

2 Kings, ch. xiii. v. 4, 5. At this time two kings of the same name again reigned in the two kingdoms for several years.

ment * which, by its curious colouring, is in strange contrast to the dryness of the Israelitish annals he went to consult the aged Elisha.

Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died: and Joash, the king of Israel, came down unto him, and wept over him, and said, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof! And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows: and he took unto him bow and arrows. And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow: and he put his hand upon it. And Elisha laid his hands upon the king's hands. And he said, Open the window eastward: and he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot: and he shot. And he said, Iahveh's arrow of victory, even the arrow of victory over Syria; for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek till thou have consumed them. And he said, Take the arrows: and he took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground: † and he smote thrice, and stayed. And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it, whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.

Joash of Israel did in fact defeat Benhadad three times, and took from him all the cities which Hazael had conquered from Israel.

In spite of these momentary triumphs, the prosperity of the two kingdoms decreased visibly. The great sentiment of popular affection which had been the mainstay of the Davidic dynasty was weakened. The scenes of anarchy which had previously been confined to the kingdom of Israel now took place in

* 2 Kings, ch. xiii. v. 14–19. This passage, unskilfully inserted in the annals of the kings, appears to be the most historical information we possess about Elisha: but the chronological arrangement of the events presents the gravest difficulties.

† With the quiver of arrows.

Judah also. Joash of Judah died in the same way as Nadab, Elah, Zimri, and Jehoram of Israel. Two of his servants, Zabad, the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad, the son of Shimrith, killed him in the citadel. It was a conspiracy amongst the chamberlains, for his son Amaziah, born of a Jerusalemite woman named Jehoaddan, succeeded him without difficulty,* and punished the murderers. The firmness shown by Joash of Judah towards the priests of the Temple was unfortunate for his memory. When the Jewish history was only written under sacerdotal supervision, he was accused of enormous crimes, and of monstrous ingratitude towards the priests, who got the credit of having saved him and re-established him on the throne of David.†

Amaziah of Judah (about 825) followed the example of his father Joash, and practised Iahveism without destroying the sanctuaries held in reverence by the people. He was successful in a war against the Edomites, defeated them in the salt plains to the south of the Dead Sea, and took Selah,‡ to which he gave the monotheistic name of Joktheel.§

* The Book of Chronicles represents this event under quite a different aspect. The account in Kings is to be preferred, and it is irreconcilable with the other story.

† This is the version in the Book of Chronicles, which was evidently dictated by the hatred aroused by the measures taken against the priests respecting the repairs of the Temple. See above, pp. 343–345.

‡ The Rock, or *Petra.*

§ Error in the *Chronicles.* Consult Thenius, pp. 340, 341.

This success ought to have directed Amaziah's attention to the enterprises which appeared naturally to fall within the policy of Judah; that is towards expeditions into the Red Sea and to India, such as Solomon and Jehoshaphat had contemplated. Unfortunately, Amaziah only dwelt upon the petty rivalries which divided the two portions of Israel.* From Petra, he sent to Joash of Israel a challenge, to which the latter made only an evasive reply. Amaziah would listen to no excuse, so Joash took the field, and the two kings met at Beth-Shemesh. The men of Judah were defeated, or rather they disbanded and returned to their own homes, while Amaziah fell into the hands of Joash, who behaved with comparative moderation. The king of Israel was resolved to enter Jerusalem by a breach in the walls, and he therefore destroyed four hundred cubits of it on the northern side, from the Gate of Ephraim† to the Corner Gate.‡ He took the gold and silver, and all the vessels, from the Temple and the royal palace, received hostages and then returned to Samaria. This conduct, so little in harmony with the ferocity of military customs at that epoch, shows that a fraternal sentiment still existed between the two peoples. The conduct of the army of Judah at Shemesh is a still stronger proof of this fact, for

* 2 Kings, ch. xiv. v. 18 and following. Compare 2 Kings, ch. xiii. v. 12.

† Afterwards *Gennat.*

‡ Near which is now the gate of Jaffa.

the men of Judah were unwilling to fight against their brethren to gratify the foolish vanity of their sovereign. But, on the other hand, it is very remarkable* that Joash of Israel should have treated the Temple as a building which for him had no religious character, as he carried away all the treasures belonging to it, without offering any sacrifice to Iahveh within its precincts. The separation of worship had become definite, although in the written documents there was a certain community of feeling between the two fractions of the people.

* The thoroughly historical character of this document (ch. xiv. v. 1–14) enables us to reason upon these details in a decided manner.

CHAPTER XVI.

JEROBOAM II. AND HIS PROPHETS.

JOASH of Israel died after reigning fifteen years, and was buried in the royal sepulchre of the kings of Israel. His son, Jeroboam II., succeeded him and reigned nearly half a century (825 to 775 B.C.). He was in some respects a restorer, and, during his reign, the kingdom of Israel was rich and powerful. Luxury once more prevailed almost as it had done under Ahab, and it became usual to have two residences, one for the summer and one for the winter.* The king's palace with its ivory decorations recalled that of the Omrides,† and the enervating voluptuous life led by the royal family in Samaria provoked comparisons with Jerusalem in the time of Solomon. The women passed their life in pleasure,‡ and the men are represented to us lying on easy couches, upon cushions covered with Damascene silk.§

* Amos, ch. iii. v. 15.

† Ibid. ch. iii. v. 15. Compare 1 Kings, ch. xxii. v. 39; Psalm xlv. v. 9.

‡ Ibid. ch. iv. v. 1 and following.

§ Ibid. ch. iii. v. 12.

This indolence, which excited the indignation of the prophets, was evidently not incompatible with military valour. Israel, under Jeroboam II., regained a portion of its sovereignty over the neighbouring peoples.* Jeroboam was supported in his efforts by a patriotic prophet, Jona, the son of Amittai, from Gath-Nepher in the tribe of Zebulon. This Jona is identified with the Jonah round whose name a very singular legend was afterward woven.† The historical Jonah appears to have been a good Israelite. He prophesied that Israel would regain the frontiers it had possessed under Solomon and that Hamath and Damascus‡ would be restored to it.

Moab was one of the countries which Jeroboam reunited to his kingdom. Moab in its despair endeavoured to secure the protection of Judah, but the proposal met with a rebuff.

This, at all events, is to be gathered from a curious prophetic poem which there is every reason to attribute to Jonah, and which appears to have been the manifesto of this expedition.§ It is one long imprecation against Moab, mingled with cruel jests

* Amos, ch. vi. v. 14.

† It will be shown in vol. iii. that the Book of Jonah, which is included in the Bible, is a pamphlet written against prophetism after the Captivity. Jonah, the son of Amittai, being one of the oldest prophets, appeared a suitable type of the whole school.

‡ 2 Kings, ch. xiv. v. 25–28. See above, pp. 31, 32, 92, 93.

§ Isaiah, ch. xv. and xvi. This poem was preserved on account of its eccentricity and malice against Moab. Isaiah afterwards availed himself of it and inserted it in his collection.

and lugubrious pleasantries. Men believed in the efficacy of the rhythmical maledictions pronounced by these seers, who made cursing a profession,* people being very sensitive to their bitter satire. They were, in a way, the journalists of the age.

> Yea, in a night, Ar of Moab is laid waste and brought to nought!
> Yea, in a night, Kir of Moab is laid waste and brought to nought!
> The people of Bayith and Dibon are gone up to the high places to weep;
> Moab howleth over Nebo and over Medeba,
> On all their heads is baldness,
> Every beard is cut off;
> In their streets they gird themselves with sackcloth;
> On their housetops, and in their broad places,
> Every one howleth, weeping abundantly.
> And Hesbon crieth out and Elealeh;
> Their voice is heard even unto Jahaz. . .
> My heart crieth out for Moab!
> Her nobles flee unto Zoar, to Eglath-shelishiyah,
> For by the ascent of Luhith, with weeping they go up;
> For in the way of Horonaim;
> They raise up a cry of destruction,
> For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate:
> For the grass is withered away,
> The tender grass faileth,
> There is no green thing.
> Therefore the abundance they have gotten,
> And that which they have laid up,
> Shall they carry away to the brook of the willows.
> For the cry has gone round about the borders of Moab;
> The howling thereof unto Eglaim,
> And the howling thereof unto Beer-elim
> For the waters of Dimon are full of blood;

---

* See vol. i. pp. 182, 183.

For I will bring yet more upon Dimon
A lion upon him that escapeth from Moab.
And upon the remnant of the land.
Send ye the lambs for the ruler of the land.*
From Sela which is towards the wilderness unto the mount
of the daughter of Zion.
For it shall be that as wandering birds,
As a scattered nest,
So shall the daughters of Moab,†
Be at the fords of Arnon.
Give counsel! Execute judgement!
Make us thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday:
Hide the outcasts;
Bewray not the wanderer!
Let mine outcasts dwell with thee;
As for Moab, be thou a covert to him from the face of the spoiler.
For the extortioner is brought to nought,
Spoiling ceaseth,
The oppressors are consumed out of the land.
And a throne shall be established in mercy,
And one shall sit thereon in truth,
In the tent of David;
Judging and seeking judgement,
And swift to do righteousness.
We have heard of the pride of Moab,‡
That he is very proud; of his arrogancy, and his pride and
his wrath
His boastings are nought.
Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab;
Every one shall howl:
For the raisin cakes of Kir-hareseth, shall ye mourn, utterly
stricken.

---

* The Moabites are supposed to have taken refuge in Edom, a country which belonged to the king of Jerusalem. They address themselves to the Edomites to make them believe that they are anxious also to belong to the kingdom of Judah.

† The cities and strong places on the shores of Arnon.

‡ Edom and Zion, whom Moab had tempted by fallacious promises, reject its proposals.

For the fields of Heshbon languish,
And the vine of Sibmah :
Her choice plants did break down the lords of nations,
They reached even unto Jazer,
They wandered into the wilderness ;
Her branches were spread abroad, they passed over the sea. . .*
I will water thee with my tears,
Oh Heshbon and Elealeh :
For upon thy summer fruits and upon thy harvest,
The battle shout is fallen,
And gladness is taken away and joy out the fruitful field.
And in the vineyards there shall be no singing; neither joyful noise,
No treader shall tread out wine in the presses.
I have made the vintage shout to cease :
Wherefore my bowels sound like a harp for Moab,†
And mine inward parts for Kir-heres.
And it shall come to pass when Moab presenteth himself,
When he wearieth himself upon the high place,
And shall come to his sanctuary to pray,
That he shall not prevail.

If the prophetic genius of Israel had produced nothing beyond poems of this kind, the world would certainly not have preserved the recollection of it. This unimportant history of an inferior nation, possessing neither great military institutions, nor political qualities, would scarcely merit attention but for the fact that, apart from a secular existence which is not in any way superior to that of Moab and Edom, the Israelitish people possessed a series of extraordinary men who, at a time when the idea

* The Dead Sea. The vineyards of Moab partially surrounded it.

† Ironical. The whole of these closing lines are full of allusions, jests and vulgar pleasantries, and can be only translated approximatively.

of right scarcely existed, assumed the position of defenders of the weak and the oppressed. During these obscure reigns, which resemble each other so closely in the effacement of the sovereign and the unimportance of the events which took place, that the impossibility of establishing an exact chronology is scarcely to be regretted, the drift of the ideas which prevailed in Israel was a very peculiar one. We have seen how the successive growth of the sacred History and the Thora went on in the mysterious obscurity of an oral tradition slowly worked out. The most powerful of the prophets, those of the time of Ahab, never committed their declamations to writing. The type of the prophetic utterances given in writing is found in the reign of Jeroboam II. Not that these eloquent orations were leisurely written by the prophets before they were pronounced, but their form was so complete that they were soon committed to writing. They were the exact equivalents of the surates of the Koran, manifestoes intended not to be read but to be recited, and which the disciples or enthusiastic hearers retained in their memory and afterwards wrote down, either upon prepared parchment, tablets, or any of the substances which preceded the use of papyrus.

The style of these compositions is not that of the *sir*, nor of the *masal*, still less that of ordinary prose. It was sonorous and cadenced, containing rhythmical phrases, not strictly parallel, but with periodical refrains and series of vivid images, the

repetition of which impressed them with great force upon the minds of those who heard them. Each poem, or rather each surate, to use the Koran word, was complete in itself and was of about the same length as an article in the newspapers of our own day. They were recited in an almost piercing tone, with modulations and cadences resembling those used for the reading of the Koran. The Koran, in fact, is the last literary specimen of the style created by the prophets of Israel. Our system of arranging all that is written in two categories, prose and verse, is not applicable to the East. Between distinct poetry and ordinary prose, the Hebrew and the Arab had all kinds of intermediaries of cadenced, ornamented and rhythmical prose. The prophetic surate is the most original creation of Hebrew genius. It made the fortune of Israelitish ideas, and fourteen hundred years later did as much for Mahomet.

The prophet of the eighth century was thus an open-air journalist, reciting his own article, adding to and often interpreting it by some symbolical act.* His great object was to impress the people and to assemble a crowd. With that view, the prophet did not scruple to resort to any of the tricks which modern publicity believes to be its own invention. He placed himself in a well-frequented

* See for instance Isaiah, ch. xx.; above, p. 248. Sometimes the prophet contented himself with relating the symbolic action. Hosea, ch. i.

thoroughfare, usually near the gate of the city. Then, in order to secure a group of listeners, he made use of the boldest means to attract attention, simulated madness, employed neologisms and peculiar words, and displayed written placards which he carried with him.* The group being formed, he declaimed his vibrating phrases, obtaining his effects at times by speaking in a familiar strain, at others by bitter jests. The type of the popular preacher was created. Buffoonery, oddly associated with a vulgar exterior, was placed at the service of piety. The Neapolitan friar, an edifying variety of Punch and Judy, has also in some respects his prototype in Israel.

* See below, p. 428.

CHAPTER XVII.

AMOS AND THE CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS.

The material prosperity of Israel under Jeroboam II. resulted in the creation of great inequalities of condition among the people. Now the most deeply rooted idea in ancient times was that some men are poor because others are rich. The utopian ideas of the Jubilee year only existed, it is true, in the pages of the Iahveist version (for in reality these laws were never applied). The fundamental principle of patriarchal societies, the equality of the heads of the family, was outrageously violated.

This derogation from the ancient customs produced its usual effect in Israel, that is to say a recrudescence of the more ardent prophetic spirit. Patriotism, as it would appear, silenced social discontent in the case of Jonah, the son of Amittai. The joy of seeing Moab humiliated satisfied him, but such was not the case with the other enthusiasts. The contrast between the condition of the rich and the poor, the conviction that wealth is always produced by injustice, and that usury and loans upon wages

are inhuman,* above all the horror of luxury and of the comforts of life, excited the most violent denunciations. One Amos, a herdsman or rather an owner of cattle at Tekoa, a district on the borders of the desert of Judah, was the interpreter of the protests of the theocratic democracy against the growing requirements of a world daily emerging more and more from childish dreams.

It may be asserted that the first article of irreconcilable journalism was written by Amos about 800 B.C. We possess ten surates composed by this patron of radical journalists which may be ranked among the strangest documents bequeathed to us by the remote past. The great bulk of Assyrian, Egyptian, and Chinese writings is untruthful and adulatory. Here, however, we have a malcontent, who boldly raises his voice and appeals, from official self-complacency, to a judge who befriends the meek. "Therefore he that is prudent shall keep silent at such a time for it is an evil time."† He speaks because a superior force impels him to do so. "Surely Iahveh will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants, the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? When the Lord Iahveh hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"‡

The style of Amos is strange, studied, and at times

* See Book of the Covenant, above, p. 311.

† Amos, ch. v. v. 13.

‡ Ibid. ch. iii. v. 7, 8. The seventh verse is suspected of being inserted afterwards.

analogous to that of Job,* though less rounded and less finished. He had seen but little of the world, and had never gone beyond Damascus and Tyre.† There is no glimpse of any knowledge of the Assyrian power.‡ The small district with which he was acquainted was a prey to universal piracy, it was the scene of a battle of all against all, in which every man's hand was against his neighbour, in which a sort of trade in white slaves was organised.§ Warrior tribes swept down upon the agricultural populations to carry off men and women, and then sell them to the Ievanim (Ionians), that is the Greeks. It was the time when civilisation was just dawning upon the shores of the Mediterranean, when much labour was required, and so slavery was enormously developed. We must remember that, in the Homeric poems, the Phœnicians were the purveyors of slaves for the whole world.|| Israel was one of the races from which this horrible trade drew its supplies. The shepherd of

* See for instance ch. ii. v. 4 and following; ch. iii. v. 4, etc.; ch. v. v. 7, 9; ch. ix. v. 5, 6.

† Hamath is to him a long way off.

‡ Amos, ch. iii. v. 9, and ch. v. v. 27, passages in which the author would have mentioned Asshur if it had entered the field of his political vision; Catheh is mentioned as the capital of a small State, ch. vi. v. 2.

§ This is what was called גלות שלמה, an entire captivity (Amos, ch. i. v. 69). Compare Exodus, ch. xxi. v. 16 (Book of the Covenant).

|| Odyssey, xiv. 288–297; xv. 475, 476; compare Herodotus, i. 12.

Tekoa casts a sorrowful glance over these scenes of horror.

> Iahveh will roar from Zion,
> And utter his voice from Jerusalem ;
> The pastures of the shepherds shall mourn
> And the top of Carmel shall wither.*

Damascus had tortured Gilead with iron harrows, therefore Iahveh should destroy the house of Hazael with lightning; a fire should devour the palace of Benhadad; the bars of Damascus should be broken; Bikath Aven,† the paradise of Zeth-Eden,‡ should become a wilderness, and the people of Aram should take refuge towards Kir.

Gaza should be punished, because its people had sold a great number of Israelitish slaves into Edom. The other cities of Palestine, Ashdod, Ashkelon and Ekron, were to share their fate. Fire should destroy the palaces of Tyre because, notwithstanding the fraternal alliance which had been entered into with Israel, the city had sold troops of captive Israelites to Edom. Edom had been pitiless for Israel his brother, therefore fire should devour the palaces of Teman and Boyrah. Ammon had ripped up pregnant women in Gilead. Woe to Rabbah-Ammon! Moab had burnt the bones of the king of Edom in lime, fire should

* The voice of Iahveh is like a burning wind, drying up everything over which it passes.

† Baalbec, Heliopolis.

‡ Paradisus on the Orontes.

destroy the palace of Kirioth. Judah had despised the law of Iahveh,* and had not observed his commandments, but had followed his ancestors and worshipped false gods. Fire should devour the palaces of Jerusalem.

The grievances of the inspired Tekoite against the kingdom of Israel are more carefully enumerated.†

> They have sold the righteous for silver
> The ebion‡ for a pair of shoes; §
> That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor;
> And turn aside the way of the anavim.||
> A man and his father will go unto the same maid
> To profane my holy name.¶
> They lay themselves down beside every altar upon clothes taken in pledge;
> And in the house of their God they drink the wine of such as have been fined.
>
> . . . .
>
> And I raised up of your sons for prophets
> And of your young men for Nazirites. . . .
> But ye gave the Nazirites wine to drink,
> And commanded the prophets, saying: Prophesy not.

The theology of Amos differs little from that of Job. The old Elohism had triumphed. Iahveh was God,

* Thus there must already have existed a rudimentary Thora, probably in writing. See above, p. 334 and following.

† Amos, ch. ii. v. 6 and following.

‡ The poor. This is the first example of this fundamental word The parallelism with *dal, saddiq* and *anav* is already to be discerned.

§ This refers not so much to the price as to the paltry object for which a free Israelite could be put up to auction.

|| Humble with a shade of piety. See below, p. 431.

¶ Allusions to hierodulism, which had penetrated into the cultus of Israel.

almost without individuality, like Allah amongst Mussulmans. "He formeth the mountains, and created the wind; and declareth unto men, what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth. Iahveh, God of hosts is his name."* Like the Iahveh of the Iahveist history, the Iahveh of Amos is anthropopathical in the highest degree, he repents him of having smitten too hard, and of the severe measures of chastisement which he has taken.† The scourges of nature are the direct action of his will.‡ Iahveh makes rain to fall over one city and not over another.§ Mildew, rust, locusts, pestilence and war are the punishments by which he invites sinners to return to him. True religion is to hate evil and love good. In doing good, man saves his life,|| by doing evil he loses himself. An impious man is a madman, blinded with pride. But the indignation of Amos is chiefly stirred by the prosperity of Jeroboam's reign, for this false success led politicians to say: "Have we not won our strength by our own power?"

In the eyes of Iahveh this is the greatest of crimes, the one which invariably leads to ruin.

The predominant idea in all the prophets, the

* Amos, ch. iv. v. 13. Compare ch. v. v. 8 and following.

† Ibid. ch. vii. v. 3, 6.

‡ Ibid. ch. iv. v. 7 and following.

§ Ibid. ch. iv. v. 6 and following.

|| Ibid. ch. v. v. 14 and following.

superiority of righteousness over ritualistic observances, is clearly enunciated by Amos.

I hate, I despise your feasts,*
And I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies,
Yea, though ye offer me your burnt offerings and meat offerings,
I will not accept them.
Neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.
Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs;
For I will not hear the melody of thy viols.
But let judgement roll down as waters,
And righteousness as a mighty stream.

Exact observance of mere ritual is of no use for securing the favour of Iahveh.

Come to Bethel and transgress ;†
To Gilgal and multiply transgression;
And bring your sacrifices every morning,
And your tithes every three days;
And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is unleavened,‡
And proclaim free-will offerings and publish them :
For this liketh you, O ye children of Israel ! . . .

Although born in the tribe of Judah, Amos concerned himself mainly with the kingdom of the North, with what he calls the house of Joseph.§ There is doubtless much exaggeration in the picture he draws of the crimes which are committed in the palace of Samaria. Amos was a desperate opposi-

* Amos, ch. v. v. 21.

† Ibid. ch. iv. v. 4 and following.

‡ Ibid. ch. iv. v. 5. I have given here the privative sense to מן.

§ Ibid. ch. v. v. 6–15 ; ch. vi. v. 6.

tionist and saw everything in the darkest colours. Fines, taxes, the payment of interest on debts, and pecuniary compensations by which the judges profited, appeared to him exactions invented by the governing classes to oppress the weak.

Women, those "kine of Bashan," are the origin of all these abuses;* they oppress the poor, saying to their husbands: "Bring and let us eat and drink well." There is no justice for the poor.† Luxury is an evil acquired through their labour. "Forasmuch as ye trample upon the poor, and take exactions from him of wheat, and have built houses of hewn stone. Ye shall not dwell in them. Ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink the wine thereof."‡ The *latifundia* which put the poor to flight § are the scourge of the country.

The ideas of Amos upon the wicked rich, dishonest merchants, men of business and monopolists are those of a man of the people, with no idea of political economy.

> Hear this, O ye that would swallow up the needy,
> And cause the poor of the land to fail, [saying]
> When will the new moon be gone, ||
> That we may sell corn?
> And the sabbath,
> That we may set forth wheat?

---

* Amos, ch. iv. v. 1 and following.

† Ibid. ch. v. v. 12 and following.

‡ Ibid. ch. v. v. 11 and following.

§ Ibid. ch. viii. v. 4.

|| The neomenia was celebrated by repose and closing the shops.

Making the ephah* small,
And the shekel great?
And dealing falsely with balances of deceit
That we may buy the poor for silver,
And the needy for a pair of shoes,
And sell the refuse of the wheat.†

This means that the poor, being unable to pay such high prices, will be forced to get into debt, and become the slave of the rich, who will then sell his bad merchandise as dearly as the good.

The prophet had a grudge against well-to-do people who lived easily, while their brethren suffered.‡

That lie upon beds of ivory,
And stretch themselves upon their couches,
And eat the lambs out of the flock,
And calves out of the midst of the stall.
That sing idle songs to the sound of the viol;
That devise for themselves instruments of music like David.
That drink wine in bowls [the amphoræ§],
And anoint themselves with the chief ointment,
But they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.
Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive.
And the revelry of them that stretched themselves shall pass away.

This great struggle against the progress of civilisation, in the name of the patriarchal ideas, was the result of a much greater advance in religious matters than had been made by the surrounding nations, just

* A measure of capacity.

† Amos, ch. viii. v. 4 and following.

‡ Ibid. ch. vi.

§ The amphora was the great vase from which the cup-bearer drew the wine with *lecythes*, in order to pour it into the guests' cups. To drink from the amphora was an act of disgraceful insobriety.

as in our day we find socialistic questions the bitterest in countries where the ancient religious creeds have disappeared. People, who are paid with bills drawn upon another life, bear the sorrow and iniquities inherent in human society more patiently than unbelievers. The politics of Amos are those of a people who believe neither in the rewards nor the punishments of the future, and who, on that account, desire the reign of absolute justice on earth. The hatred of injustice is strangely diminished by the assurance of compensations beyond the grave. Men are very ready, also, to imagine that the state of society before the appearance of large fortunes was less iniquitous than it is now, and it is complacently assumed that the weak were better protected then. Thus, at the present time, a great many socialists regret the freemen's privileges of the Middle Ages. If they could be gratified and enjoy but one day of the rule which they fancy to have been so perfect, their illusion would be destroyed for ever.

Amos is very severe in his criticisms upon the worship of the tribes of the North. Bethel, Gilgal, Dan and Beersheba,* are, to him, centres of a powerless and idolatrous worship.† In this respect, the

* See above, pp. 157 and following.

† Amos, ch. iii. v. 14; ch. iv. v. 4 and following; ch. v. v. 5 and following; ch. viii. v. 14. The same idea predominates in the fragments of the prophets of the North which have been preserved to us. It must be observed that the compilation, or rather the extracts from the prophets, were made by the writers of the South, who have only taken from the schismatical prophets those chapters

vision in which the prophet saw Iahveh standing before the altar of Bethel is the most significant.* It is an altar to Iahveh, but Iahveh does not like it. He tells the prophet to smite the chapiters so that the thresholds might shake and break the heads of the Israelites with the pieces of the temple.

Israel is the sinful kingdom;† Israel shall perish,‡ but Judah shall be saved.§ Iahveh will repair the breaches of the house of David.|| The kingdom thus restored shall reconquer the nations which had formerly called upon the name of Iahveh and the ancient frontiers of which, Hamath and Eziongeber, were the extreme boundaries to the north and the south.

This ardent rebellion against the established government, this false position of a man of Judah preaching anathema and destruction in the midst of the kingdom of Israel, was scarcely tenable. Amos had three chief threats with which he alarmed the populace; locusts, fire and the plumb-line. He said that he had seen Iahveh in the act of forming locusts after the royal mowing.¶ The locusts were about to

which harmonised with their political views, that is to say, which furnished them with arguments in favour of the unity of the nation, the centralisation of the worship at Jerusalem and the ideal frontiers of Edom and Lebanon.

* Chapter ix.

† Amos, ch. ix. v. 8.

‡ Lamentation in anticipation. Ch. v. v. 1 and following.

§ Amos, ch. ix. v. 8 and following.

|| Ibid. ch. ix. and following.

¶ The king had a right to the first mowings, the aftermaths were for the people.

devour everything, when the prophet stayed them by his prayer.

In the same way fire was beginning to drain out the Mediterranean, and would further devour the land; but prayer might yet be the means of averting the danger. As to the level or plumb-line, nothing stopped it; it passed over the high places of Isaac and the sanctuaries of Israel and was the sign of absolute devastation. The house of Jeroboam II. was specially doomed to the sword. At Bethel, where Amos exercised his ministry of terror, these threats produced great excitement. Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, denounced Amos to the king of Israel, and pointed out that the country could not tolerate a man who daily prophesied the extermination of the royal family and the carrying away of the people. At the same time, he very sensibly said to Amos: "O thou seer, go, return to the land of Judah, and there eat bread and prophesy at thine ease. But thou shalt not prophesy at Bethel any more, for it is a king's sanctuary,* a national establishment."† Amos replied:

> I was no prophet.
> Neither was I a prophet's son;
> But I was an herdman,
> And a dresser of sycamore trees.‡
> And Iahveh took me from following the flock,
> And Iahveh said unto me: Go prophesy unto my people Israel.

---

* *Migdas mélek.* † *Beth-mamlaka.* (Amos, vii. 10–13).

‡ It is necessary to prune the sycamore tree for the fruit to ripen.

Amos would not yield, but continued to utter his terrible prophecies against the State and against the priest of Bethel.

The prophetic doctrine, as it may be called, was already completed in Amos's writings. "The day of Iahveh," that is to say the appearance of Iahveh as the supreme judge, the redresser of wrongs, was already a fixed idea in Israel. From the Book of Amos to the vision of Patmos, not one essential feature will be added to the picture. The *Dies iræ dies illa* is already adumbrated. The sentiment of justice was so strong among the Israelites that any violation of the law appeared to them to entail the end of the world as a necessary consequence. As soon as an Israelite saw an abuse, he concluded that the world must be coming to an end.

There was no other means of saving the honour of Iahveh. The Hebrew thinker resembled a modern nihilist in holding that, if the world cannot be righteous, it had better cease to exist, that it cannot live in harmony with that which is a subversion of it. Every cloud in the horizon thus appeared to the prophet as a sign of the catastrophe he expected. The revolution which this people had imagined was certainly the most radical that man has ever dreamed of, since God himself was to preside over it.

This day of Iahveh was already depicted in the most terrible colours. It was to be a day of darkness, not of light, there would be signs in the heavens,

and the sun would set at noonday.* Woe to those who desired to see that day. It would be as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house, and leaned against the wall, and a serpent bit him.†

A golden age would follow this day of divine justice.‡ The earth would be so fertile that harvest and seed time would come one upon the other. The mountains would run with wine, and Iahveh would then bring back the captives of his people. They would rebuild their waste cities, plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof. Israel should be no more plucked up from the land which Iahveh had given him.§

* Amos, ch. viii. v. 9 and following.

† Ibid. ch. v. v. 18 and following.

‡ Ibid. ch. ix. v. 13, 14, 15. Compare Joel, ch. iv. v. 18.

§ The analogies between the apocalyptic theory of the oldest prophets and that which prevailed after the Captivity are calculated to arouse suspicion. When we find in Amos, Joel and Hosea the description of the day of Iahveh, the announcement of the national restoration and of the unification of the worship, paradisaical descriptions of the future and the promise of the conversion of the heathen, we are tempted to regard them as interpolations. But we must not dwell too much upon these doubts. The extracts from the ancient prophets have been chosen intentionally, with the object of proving that the prophets, before the destruction of Samaria, had upon important points the same ideas as their more modern successors. See above, p. 367, note †. The passages have not been fabricated, but they have been selected. Now it is well known how completely this system of selected passages, only showing one side of everything, and carefully underlining some points to the detriment of others, warps an author's ideas. It is as though a literary man wanted to prove that all the ideas of the nineteenth century had existed in the seventeenth, and, in order to do this, strung

An earthquake* which took place two years after Amos had uttered his threats appeared to bear out these gloomy predictions, while, at a later date, other events still further verified them. Perhaps Amos had received some warning of the impending invasion of the Assyrians.† The prophets frequently made use of information they had received and of their personal sagacity in divining the future and increasing their influence.

We possess, under the name of Joel, the son of Pethuel, an undated prophetic tirade, of a style which very closely resembles that of Amos, and which contains identically the same ideas as those of the herdman of Tekoa.‡ I am inclined to think that *Joel*

together isolated passages from Vauban, Fénelon and La Bruyère. If we possessed the complete writings of the old prophetic school we should find them very different from those of the more modern school, but we have only phrases from the ancients in which they resemble the moderns. In Amos, more particularly, we detect the use of scissors in several places (above all in chapter v.).

* Amos, ch. i. v. 1; Zechariah, ch. xiv. v. 5. It is possible that the allusion to be found in Zechariah is taken from Amos, ch. i. v. 1, and not from a direct account.

† Ibid. ch. v. v. 27; ch. vi. v. 14.

‡ Phrases are repeated in both books (compare Amos, ch. i. v. 2, and Joel, ch. iv. v. 16; Amos, ch. ix. v. 13, and Joel, ch. iv. v. 18). We find in both the same analogies with Job, the same political horizon. The arguments used against the antiquity of the Book of Joel are equally valid against that of Amos. But no doubt has arisen about Amos. There is no critical advantage in supposing chapter iv. to have been added after the Captivity. From ch. v. v. 4 onwards, such an hypothesis could not be applied: we revert to the pre-Assyrian horizon. Recall the observations above, p. 371, note §.

and *Pethuel* are symbolical names,* and to consider the Book of Joel as a sequel to that of Amos. An invasion of locusts, followed by drought, was the subject of this curious work.† The invaders are described in a style which recalls the description of Behemoth and Leviathan in Job, and which was afterwards imitated in the Christian Apocalypse.‡ In this plague, the author recognises the announcement of the day of Iahveh, and the subject which is only glanced at in Amos § is fully developed in Joel. Iahveh carries out his judgments by outward disasters, and each one is, in the eyes of the prophet, a manifestation of the avenging judge : every natural catastrophe has a moral cause, and proceeds from an angry God. The visitation is not a casualty to be averted, but the action of a supreme being ; now a supreme being, very different from Neptune, Apollyon or Indra, can be guided by a moral motive only. Plagues are therefore precursors of the divine judgment. The noise made by the cloud of locusts is

* Joel = "Io is El." Io and El are the same. Pethuel = "the follower or believer in El," who is as a child or a disciple in the hands of El, knowing nothing but what El teaches him. Compare Lemuel (Proverbs, ch. xxxi. v. 1). Notice the author's fancy for symbolical names, החרוץ עמק. צמק יהושפט, analogous to those in Hosea. The absence of date in the title is unusual in ancient prophetic literature, but is easily explained upon the above hypothesis.

† Compare Amos, ch. viii. v. 1–3 ; Nahum, ch. iii.

‡ Joel, ch. ii. v. 1 and following ; compare ch. i. v. 6. Compare Apocalypse, ch. ix. v. 7 and following.

§ Amos, ch. v. v. 18–20.

the voice of Iahveh, it is Iahveh himself appearing upon the scene. The locusts are the fantastic cavalry of an invading army, directed by the universal Judge.*

Iahveh uttereth his voice before his army;
His camp is very great.
For he is strong that executeth his word:
For the day of Iahveh is great and very terrible;
And who can abide it?
Yet even now, saith Iahveh, Turn ye to me with all your heart,
And with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:
And rend your heart, and not your garments,
And turn unto Iahveh your God:
For he is gracious and full of compassion,
Slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy,†
Who knoweth whether he will not turn
And repenteth him of the evil.
Who knoweth whether he will not turn and repent,
And leave a blessing behind him.
Even a meal offering and a drink offering unto Iahveh your God?
Blow the trumpet in Zion.
Sanctify a fast.
Call a solemn assembly.
Gather the people.
Sanctify the congregation.
Assemble the old men.
Gather the children, and those that suck the breasts.

---

* Joel, ch. ii. v. 11–17. In places, the Book of Joel appears to be allegorical, composed at a time when men were compelled to use mysterious language. The locusts would be the Assyrians, and this would explain the pseudonym of the title. But a number of difficulties stand in the way of this hypothesis. Compare Joel, ch. iv. v. 10, with Isaiah, ch. ii. v. 4, and Micah, ch. iv. v. 3. Of these three passages, it is the text of Joel which is the prototype.

† The words ונחם על הרעה in verse 13, are a marginal varietur of ונחם, in verse 14.

Let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.
Let the priests, the ministers of Iahveh, weep between the porch and the altar.
And let them say, Spare thy people, O Iahveh, give not thine heritage to reproach,
That the nations should rule over them:
Wherefore should they say among the peoples: Where is their God?

Iahveh, touched by their fastings and prayers, is reconciled to his people and repairs the havoc caused by the passage of his great army.* But the fact that the accidental passage of a swarm of locusts leads the Seer to the idea of a general "day of Iahveh" for all the human race is the special characteristic of the whole order of the ideas cherished by the prophets. The general lines of the Apocalypse are thus already traced. The plagues which precede the terrible day and the burning ardours of the judgment of God are followed by an age of happiness, during which God reigns as sovereign over a new earth.†

And it shall come to pass afterwards that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids, in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of Iahveh come.‡

---

* Joel, ch. ii. v. 25.

† If the book called after Joel be regarded as a later composition, there still remains the Book of Amos, and it contains the same ideas, only less developed. Ch. v. v. 18–20, ch. ix. v. 13–15.

‡ Joel, ch. ii. v. 28 and following.

God would then assemble all the nations in the plain symbolically named Jehoshaphat (Iahveh judges).* He will fight, or rather roar, from the hill of Zion. The sun and the stars fight with him, so his victory is easy. He punishes those who have ill-treated Judah and Jerusalem, particularly the Philistines, the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, who have sold their captives out of Judah to the Ievanim or Ionians,† and the Ionians who have bought them.‡ Zion, the chosen dwelling-place of Iahveh, will be inviolable in the future, and become a source of life, fertility and happiness for all those who approach her. On the other hand, Egypt and Idumea will become a desert.

These ideas will fill the imagination of the Israelites until the first century of the Christian era, and become the source of the most extraordinary of all religious movements. If any one should be astonished at finding them so completely expressed at this remote date, I may point out that these ideas were such a natural fruit of the most deeply rooted doctrines of Israel as to the justice of God and the essential mortality of man, that they were certain to find expression as soon as Israel attained the power of reflection. They were the equivalent of the system of tardy

* Needless to say that the identification of this imaginary valley with that of Kidron was of much later date.

† An allusion to unknown events.

‡ Compare Zechariah, ch. ix., a very ancient portion. See below, p. 392. Compare for the slave trade, above, pp. 360, 361, a coincidence which says much for the authenticity of Joel.

reparations which other races have conceived under the form of the immortality of the soul. These ideas, which theologians call eschatological, are found in the authentic portions of Isaiah, and it is certain that Isaiah did not invent them. We are not, therefore, surprised that the compilers of the prophetic volume in the sixth or seventh century B.C., searching in the records of the ancient prophets, should have found there pages which bore a striking resemblance to the brilliant declarations of more recent prophets, and have eagerly added these documents to their collection.

Under such circumstances, the political horizon is the real test of the age of these writings.* When we find no reference made to Assyria, and the prophet solely concerned with the small wars between the populations around Israel, within the boundaries of Tyre and Damascus, we may feel sure that we are studying a work belonging to the old school. Thus a chapter that has reached us under the apparently symbolic name of Obadiahou (the servant of Iahveh),† was probably written during the reign of Jeroboam II. or of Uzziah. The land of Edom is the subject of this enthusiastic writer, who is humiliated by a passing defeat and yet feels certain of triumphs to come. Each year fresh complications occur between Judah, Israel, Edom, Moab, and Ammon ; and therefore the

* See my treatise in the *Journal des Savants*, November, 1888.

† This is the prophet called Obadiah. It is remarkable that neither his father's name nor his birthplace is quoted.

endeavour to ascertain the exact year to which such a document refers is almost useless. The same hatred always existed among these peoples, and the violence of their denunciations never varies. As the diatribe in question speaks eloquently of the "day of Iahveh over all the nations," and of the revenge which Israel will take,* it was included among the prophetic extracts. One passage in this short document would make it appear that, as one of the incidents of war at that time, Jerusalem was surprised, only the citadel or *millo* escaping, thanks to the strength of its walls. Even the Temple appears to have been polluted by the revels of the conquerors.† Such an event was very possible, and the official historiographer may very well have omitted it.

Another prophetic fragment appears to date from this time.‡ The author does not go beyond the old circle, and does not mention the Assyrians. The Ievanim, or Greeks, dealers in slaves, are the objects of his wrath.§ Like Hosea, he deplores the separation of the two halves of Israel. He is filled with

* Obadiah, v. 15 and following.

† Ibid. v. 16 and following. This is the chief argument of those authorities who place the date of Obadiah's writings after the Captivity. But these prophetic *convicia* against the peoples bordering upon Palestine could not date from the Persian epoch, when the populations of the districts ruled by the satraps were no longer fighting against one another. In my opinion Obadiah is like Amos, a pre-Assyrian prophet.

‡ This is the ninth chapter of the present Book of Zechariah. See below, p. 391.

§ Compare Joel, ch. iv. v. 6.

rage against Damascus and the Aramean countries,* against Hamath, Tyre and Sidon, countries which were wise in the estimation of the world, but of purely secular wisdom and civilisation, and also against the cities of the Philistines. All these rich and powerful countries shall be destroyed by fire. But they may then become converted, abandon their impure sacrifices, and be merged honourably in Judah, like the Jebusites, who, from Canaanites as they were, had become Israelites. The prophet then conjures up in his imagination the ideal of a gentle peaceful king, who should be averse to war-horses and chariots.

> Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion;
> Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem:
> Behold thy king cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation;
> Lowly and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass.
> And I will cut off the chariots from Ephraim,
> And the horse from Jerusalem,
> And the battle-bow shall be cut off;
> And he shall speak peace unto the nations:
> And his dominion shall be from sea to sea,†
> And from the River to the ends of the earth.

The imagination of Israel was taking its revenge for the disappointments of the reality. Here are the first traces of the Messiah king, who is to realise

* Zechariah, ch. ix. v. 1. I read חורן for חדרך, and עם ארם for עין ארם.

† That is to say from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. Elath, or Eziongeber, was the object ever held in view by the kings of Judah.

all the hopes of the nation; here we see him with all the characteristics which will be attributed to him by Isaiah and Micah. All this is already to be found in these ancient prophets. The promises which will be so openly proclaimed in the time of Hezekiah had been clearly expressed under Jeroboam II. and Uzziah.

CHAPTER XVIII.

APPEARANCE OF ASSYRIA IN THE AFFAIRS OF PALESTINE.

We are lamentably short of historical information concerning the century during which flourished and wrote the remarkable men whose works Israel has collected into the volume of its nabis. We find ourselves, as it were, in presence of a series of leading articles, mixed up and disconnected, referring to events of which we know scarcely anything from other sources. It would seem that after the death of Jeroboam II., his son Zachariah succeeded him in the ordinary course. But this reign was a short one. Zachariah was killed in Samaria, before all the people, by Shallum, son of Jabesh, who became king in his stead. With Zachariah ended the reign of the house of Jehu (about 770 B.C.), which had given five kings to Israel, having maintained the supremacy of the kingdom of the North over Judah, and held its own pretty well against the permanent enemy, the Aramean kingdom of Damascus. If the elevation of the founder of this dynasty was as much due to fanaticism as the Jewish historiographer

asserts, it must be confessed that there is little trace of this origin to be found in the reigns of his successors. The prophets are much attached to these kings, and appear to have been on peaceable terms with them; but they do not seem to have demanded any acts of persecution from them. Nor do they appear to have attempted to create for Jehu a past analogous to that of David, as would have been the case if Jehu had rendered such great service to the worship of Iahveh as is to be inferred from the present text of the Book of Kings.

The assassination of Zachariah was followed by a regular state of military anarchy.* Shallum reigned only a month. He was killed by Menahem, son of Gadi, who got up a conspiracy in Tirzah, the ancient capital, and thence marched upon Samaria. He was a man noted for his cruelty. The city of Tiphsah,† near Samaria, having refused to open its gates to him, he had all the men in it put to the sword and the women that were with child ripped up.‡ It appears that his power was always being called in question.§ The kingdom of Israel was writhing beneath the attacks of an incurable malady. Its

* See Zechariah, ch. xi. v. 8 (the three shepherds in a month), and especially Hosea, ch. iii. v. 4, 5. See below, p. 392.

† Almost certainly a correction for תפסח (2 Kings, ch. xv. v. 16). The word מתרצה to be struck out; carried forward by mistake from verse 14.

‡ Allusion is made in Hosea, ch. x. v. 14, to a similar occurrence, related as taking place at Beth-Arbel.

§ This is to be inferred from 2 Kings, ch. xv. v. 19.

social and religious organisation was in a state of complete decomposition.*

Military conspiracies also increased in number at Jerusalem. Joash had been raised to the throne and precipitated from it by a plot of this kind. His son Amaziah perished through a conspiracy. He succeeded in escaping from Jerusalem to Lachish, whither the conspirators pursued him and put him to death. His body was placed in the chariot upon which he had driven, and his own horses drew it back to Jerusalem, where he was buried with the customary rites of the kings.

The army which had overthrown Amaziah took in his stead one of his sons, Azariah,† the issue of a Jerusalemite named Jecoliah. Azariah, or Uzziah, does not appear to have been the eldest of his family; but the army preferred him, perhaps because he was very young, being only sixteen. His early doings showed extreme weakness,‡ but afterwards he displayed more strength. His reign of fifty-two years was, upon the whole, a prosperous one for Jerusalem. Edom became once more subject to Judah,§ and Azariah resumed the expedition, so unhappily cut short, of his father in the Wadi-Arabah.|| He conquered Elath, fortified

* Hosea, ch. iii. v. 4.

† There is room for hesitation between Uzziah and Azariah (עזריה, עוזיה, עזיה). The Assyrian monuments read Azariah. But do they refer to the same person?

‡ 2 Kings, ch. xiv. v. 14 and following. Compare Amos, ch. ix. v. 12.

§ Amos, ch. ix. v. 12.

|| Note Amos, ch. vi. v. 14.

it, and attached it again to the kingdom of Judah. But the voyages to Ophir were not resumed, and no more sandal wood was brought to Jerusalem.

In religious matters, Azariah followed in the steps of his father and his grandfather. He was a moderate Iahveist. He did not suppress the high places; but this was a reproach not made against him until after his death; during his lifetime, no one, in all probability, thought that the plurality of places of worship was a crime. It may be that the tradition according to which he was struck with leprosy was an outcome of the bad account given of him by the pietist historians.

Despite the powerful fermentation kept up by the prophets, perhaps in consequence of this fermentation, Israel was still a factor of no importance in the world. The efforts of nations, like those of individuals, receive an enormous coefficient from the general activity of the age. Even evil is sometimes fruitful by reason of the reaction which it brings about; only what is commonplace and paltry disorder is altogether sterile. About 765 or 760,* a fact of capital importance occurred which changed the axis of politics in the East. There then arose, in the valleys of the Orontes and the Jordan, a military power unlike anything which had ever been

* Chronology is very vague in this case. See Oppert's *Chronologie Biblique*, pp. 29–32; ibid., *Salomon et ses Successeurs*, 1877; Schrader, *Die Keil. und das A. T.* (second edition), p. 217 and following; Duncker, *Gesch. des Alt.*, ii. (fifth edition), p. 270 and following; Maspero, *Hist. Anc.* (fourth edition), pp. 237, 238.

seen before. Damascus, Tyre and Hamath, the Philistine cities to which the chief fame and importance had hitherto belonged, henceforth were subordinate in their movements to the action of a remote centre.

The relations of the Hebrews with Assyria dated back to their earliest history, but for centuries they had frequently been broken off. The Assyria, moreover, known to the Beni-Israel, was the Mesopotamian region of Sarug and of Harran, perhaps previously Babylonia and Chaldea. The ancient Assyrian Empire had an essentially civilising character. It possessed its doctrines, its codes of sacred discipline, its bodies of priests and sages, an inkling of rational science, advanced knowledge of the arts. With time, on the other hand, there had formed at Nineveh the centre of an empire, the strength of which seems to have been derived from the vigorous and hardy hordes which have always found a home in the mountains of Kurdistan. This was the first appearance of military force in the world, the result being a brutal despotism, which does not seem to have been animated by any moral or religious idea. What constituted intellectual ability and right as they were formerly understood, became words devoid of all meaning. We can follow, upon mile after mile of bas-reliefs, quite terrible in their realism,* the traces of this ancient military system, with its formidable siege-works, its barrenness of ideas, and its

* In the British Museum, or in the Louvre.

savage customs. Cruelty is with it, as with the Redskins, a force and a motive of action. Scenes of torture are represented with as much care and fondness as scenes of victory. The king, a sort of Attila or Tamerlane, stands out as being the one centre around which all else converged. In a system of this kind there is no place for the great minister, the great captain, or the great artist. The only figures by the side of the king are those of soldiers, servitors and executioners. The king is the true god of this art of scalpers. Nothing has any existence in juxtaposition to him. Every form of representation has but one end: to prove that he is mighty. And the real proof of might, according to this logic of savages, is to have your foe flayed alive at your feet.

The world had never experienced anything like this before. Egypt and Babylon had reigned by dint of force, amid populations weaker than themselves, and, above all, not so well organised. Valiant ringleaders, such as David, had made terror serve the purpose of their ambition. The Moabites, subjugated by David, had been put through punishments as terrible as the vanquished of Nineveh. But nothing in the way of systematic tyranny had ever yet been felt. It was, in truth, as the Hebrew seers understood it, the first empire, the first agglomeration of a people by conquest. The Greek Empire, the Roman Empire, even the Persian Empire in a certain measure, were to be pardoned their acts of violence for the general good which they brought about, and

their contribution to the cause of progress. The Assyrian Empire appears to have effected nothing but evil; one cannot find the trace of any idea which it promulgated, or of any good cause which it served. Like the Tartar Empires of the Middle Ages, its passage was marked only by destructions. For the matter of that, it may well be that Tartar blood was already dominant in these terrible hordes, and that the sombre conquerors who terrified the eighth century B.C. had more than an outward resemblance with the Turks, with Attila and with Yengis-Khan.

The reaction from these cyclones in the semi-patriarchal world of Syria and Arabia was a terrible one. These primitive little groups of men had always been imbued with the idea that the government of the universe is, upon the whole, fairly just, that riches, power and worldly consideration appertain to the honest man, or, at all events, come to him in the end; that adversity is only a passing trial which turns to the advantage of the man whom God has smitten. But all at once evil rose like a monstrous *rokh* upon the horizon, brutality and violence became masters of the world. These stupid and cruel hoplites, who march in serried ranks to the conquest of Asia, are the very antipodes of the just man, responsible for his own acts, such as the author of the Book of Job, for instance, conceives him.

The fact, moreover, was not one confined to Assyria. The mercenary became the master of the world. Up

till that time, people had fought in self-defence; now war was learnt as a calling likely to be a beneficial one.* To the classifications of primitive ages, during which men were divided, according to their occupations, into agriculturists, shepherds, hunters and brigands, had to be added the category of those who sold themselves to another to kill or to be killed. There was a vast association of plundering and pirating all over the world. It is the age of piracy which is depicted to us in the Homeric poems. The exploiting of man by man is now the common law. Captivity is now regarded as the crowning evil, the very type of misfortune.† The noblest born man may, at any moment, become the *æchmalote* of any one who may take him by surprise. The most accomplished patriarch is ever exposed to becoming the prey of a band of guerillas, who do worse than kill him, who pollute him, and reduce him to the subjection of a beast, keeping him to die a thousand deaths.

What rendered the new Assyrian Empire particularly odious to the Semites who had remained true to the ancient creeds was its impiety. We see no sign of any temples in the Assyrian world of this age; the monuments show scarcely any religious symbol.‡ In view of this absolute lack of all fear

* Isaiah, ch. ii. v. 4; Micah, ch. iv. v. 3.

† Note the metaphorical meanings of שוב שבות, שבה, שבות.

‡ The Mongols, upon their entrance among the inhabitants of Western Asia, had a like effect upon the Mussulmans, as being a people devoid of religion.

of God, the idea which must have suggested itself to simple souls, which could only see the externals of a thing, was that the sovereign had himself worshipped. This substitution of man for God, which it was thought could already be detected in the myths of the most ancient history, such as Nimrud the *Kesil*,* appeared the sheerest madness. The essence of the mind of the patriarchal Semite was respect for the individual. This suppression of God's creatures for the gratification of unbounded pride, this equality in universal slavery, was revolting to the proud spirits which could not brook the idea of a State, and which even regarded the subjection of small princelets, such as those of Judea and Israel, as being in itself a great fall.

The prophets ought to have felt the most indignation, but viewing the monster only from a distance, while they saw, on the contrary, their adversaries of Jerusalem and of Samaria close at hand, they made use of Assyria as a sort of bugbear with which to frighten their fellow-countrymen. Sometimes, even, they seemed singularly well inclined towards their worst enemies, and to deserve the reproach of being the friends of the Assyrians. Misapprehensions of this kind easily arise. Narrow-minded people always accuse those who are gifted with foresight with desiring the misfortunes which they foresee and fore-

* The Giant, or Orion, who sought to rebel against God, and was chained to the vault of heaven.

tell. The part of Cassandra is the most melancholy that can fall to the lot of those who love truth.

Every year an expedition left Nineveh and carried the terror of the king of Assyria through the regions bordering on the basin of the Tigris and the Euphrates. Armenia, the eastern part of Asia Minor, Cilicia and the whole of northern Aramea were subdued and almost assimilated. It was about 765 B.C. that the calamity reached the countries bordering upon Israel. In presence of such a force, resistance was impossible. Prudence enjoined union and alliances with neighbouring peoples, especially with the cities of Phœnicia. But the prophets (the journalists as we should now call them) carried every question to a sort of paroxysm. Their hatred of Tyre and Sidon quite blinded them.* Jealousy between the classes was very great; moreover, the rivalry between the two kingdoms opened an easy breach for a great foreign power. Those whom consanguinity ought to have brought together vied with each other in obsequiousness to the common enemy, in order to direct his wrath as best suited their secret enmities.†

We know nothing of the first Assyrian pressure upon Israel, which took place under the reign of Menahem.‡ This prince offered his submission and

* See Zechariah, ch. ix.; Isaiah, ch. xxiii.

† Hosea, ch. v. v. 12, etc.

‡ This first appearance of the Ninivite power in the Israelite world was effected by the Assyrian sovereign whom the Hebrew historiographers called Poul or Phul, and whom it is not easy to

paid the king of Assyria a thousand talents of silver, in consideration for which the latter became his protector. Menahem had the contribution paid by his well-to-do subjects, and seemed to resign himself without regret to a situation which guaranteed his tottering kingdom against the internal dangers by which it was threatened. His son Pekahiah succeeded him, and reigned only two years. He was assassinated in the central pavilion of his palace at Samaria* by the chief of his guard, Pekah, the son of Remaliah, aided by a body of about fifty Gileadites.

A few prophetic pieces of this time have been preserved to us among the anonymous fragments which were placed in the *editio princeps* of the prophetic books, at the end of the volume, after the last of the prophets, who was Zechariah, the son of Barachiah.†

identify with the data of Assyriology. It is certainly not Tiglath-Pilezer. When we remember that this word פול, which may lead to so many mistakes of the copyists, is only really written once in the Hebraic historiography (the Chronicles merely repeat in this case the Books of Kings), and then in a text teeming with errors, one comes to the conclusion that the question must not be pushed too far. In the Assyrian lists, the king best answering the description is undoubtedly Assurdanil II. The identification of Poul with the king of Babylon Πῶρος, of the Canon of Ptolemy, gives rise to much greater difficulties. See Schrader, *Die Keilinschr.*, p. 227 and following; Oppert, in *Babyl. and Oriental Record*, vol. ii. No. 5 (London, 1888).

* The words את ארגב ואת האריה are quite unintelligible. They remind one of the *Ariel of Moab*, 2 Samuel, ch. xxiii. v. 20. Note the word *salis* which recalls the strong men of David.

† Zechariah, ch. ix.–xi. These fragments appear to be by different authors. See above, p. 375, note ‡; p. 382, note *. I shall deal with the facts in chapters xii. to xiv. in the third volume.

One or two of these pieces were perhaps by the Zechariah, son of Jeberechiah, of whom Isaiah speaks as of one of the faithful witnesses to the truth.* The similarity of the two names would have helped to increase the confusion. However this may be, the reflections of the men of God, after the humiliation of Menahem, were very melancholy. Israel is a flock destined for the slaughter.† The shepherds sell the flock to the butcher in order to enrich themselves. Upon all sides are raging cruel wars and anarchy. At one time, three shepherds were seen within one month,‡ while, crowning misfortune of all, the sheep prey upon one another. The prophet then breaks his staff, which is called Fraternity, in token of the final rupture of brotherhood between Judah and Israel. Having refused to accept good shepherds, the people will be delivered over to terrible shepherds, armed with sharp knives, who will consume them. These are the conquerors and the usurpers. This is what comes of not having preserved the kings after Iahveh's own heart. It is the fault of the governing classes, of the false prophets.§ But Iahveh will give Judah and Joseph their revenge. He will disperse them among the nations, and then he will gather them together

* Isaiah, ch. viii. v. 4. See below, p. 428.

† Zechariah, ch. xi. v. 4.

‡ Ibid. ch. xi. v. 8. An allusion, no doubt, to Zachariah, Shallum, and Menahem. See above, p. 382.

§ Ibid. ch. x.

again.* The pride of Asshur shall be abased, the sceptre of Egypt shall disappear.

About the same time, Jotham succeeded upon the throne of Jerusalem to his father Uzziah or Azariah. He followed the same line of conduct as his ancestors, being zealous for the Temple, but tolerant of the high places. He built, or rather he decorated, the higher gate of the Temple, and added to the fortifications of Ophel.†

The commonest prudence would have dictated to the small States of Syria union against Asshur. Unfortunately, the divisions were greater than ever. When a great political force comes in contact with smaller forces divided among themselves, the result is always a polarisation. The Empire of Germany, in the Middle Ages, owing to its position side by side with and above the Italian republics, created two parties, the Guelph and the Ghibeline. A similar thing occurred in Syria, as soon as the Ninivite power began to be felt. Damascus and Israel, forgetting their long quarrels, placed themselves at the head of a league against Assyria. Judah, at the same time, was bent upon quite the opposite course. From the reign of Jotham, Rezin, the king of Damascus, and Pekah, son of Remaliah, harassed the kingdom of Judah most cruelly. We shall soon find the Assyrian army

* The reader must refer back to my views upon what guided the author of the collection of the Minor Prophets in his selections. See above, p. 371, note §.

† 2 Kings, ch. xv. v. 32–38; 2 Chronicles, ch. xxvii.

appearing for the second time, at the appea' of Judah, in the region of the Abana and the Upper Jordan.

What made the weight of Assyria so heavy in Syrian affairs was, in reality, Egypt. The sudden growth of the Ninivite kingdom had produced one of those antagonisms which invariably arise when two nations meet to fight for the hegemony of the world. Egypt and Assyria were the two most powerful agglomerations which the world had yet seen, and the fatal law which governs humanity when it is guided only by its brutal instincts (alas! how far from being a thing of the past this is!) made it inevitable that they should fight out the battle. Looking over the heads of the small Syrian kingdoms, the two great empires gazed at each other, and took each other's measure. Egypt was, as a rule, allied to the cities of Phœnicia,* which led to complications full of peril with Assyria. Public opinion in the States bordering on the Jordan was very strongly excited. The changes in alliances† created terrible oscillations in these small countries. These brought out an increase in the common baseness. One people was constantly calculating the forces of its rivals and on the watch for any sign of falling away; these peoples avowed, as it were, their feebleness, and were half beaten in advance by the very fact of being so

* Isaiah, ch. xxiii. v. 5.

† Hosea, ch. vii. v. 11; nearly the whole of Hosea.

much concerned with regard to the quarrels of the strong.

Prophetism more especially suffered from these intrigues. The taste for political imbroglios is one which grows very rapidly in pious coteries; the devout often take pleasure in the tortuous dabblings of diplomacy. The prophets, being essentially writers for the public, will be anxious to be kept posted in the political secrets of the great powers. With the revelations from on high they will too often mingle the tittle-tattle of tale-tellers. In these ever doubtful questions of alliances and coalitions they will compromise the authority of Iahveh, and we shall find, not without a pang, the ardent upholders of right and of pure religion expending upon aimless combinations as much passion and eloquence as they had displayed in favour of justice and truth.

But the genius of Israel, never ceasing to ponder over the problem of humanity, measured with sagacity the import of the great events of the world, and its views gained fresh breadth at each revolution. The wise men of Israel soon saw that the game of small towns and small kingdoms was played out, that there could no longer be any question of local gods, that the national Iahveh had only one way of maintaining his place, and that was by becoming the universal God. Asshur, by giving to the East the idea of a great power, contributed almost as much as the peasants of Israel to the progress of monotheism.

Prophetism will henceforth be torn between two tendencies, the hatred of a colossal pride and the dazzling effect of a central force of humanity, which must be connected with Iahveh by mysterious ties. As a matter of fact, and as a general tendency, the prophets will be on the side of Asshur.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PROPHET HOSEA.

THE mouthpiece of Iahveh, at this moment so full of apprehension and trouble, was Hosea, son of Beeri, who might be taken, from his language, his ideas and his imagery, for a brother of Amos the shepherd. The great epoch of sonorous declamation had not yet begun. There is very little rhythm in Hosea; he writes with the fierce vigour of a man of the people, not being stopped by trivialities or incongruous similes. The accent of passion, seeking only to strike a blow home, never has found expression in terms more terse, more abrupt, more penetrating. He does not refrain from the use of a pun when it is likely to be of service to him, for puns, which are distasteful to cultivated minds, have considerable effect upon the people. He does not even feel any scruples about employing slang.* He can only be compared to a preacher of the League or to some Puritan pamphleteer in the time of Cromwell.

Assyria is, with Egypt, almost the sole preoccupa-

* The king *Iareb*, Hosea, ch. x. v. 6. Note especially chapter i.

tion of Hosea.* The pressure of Assyria is already so great that the seer ventures to predict the captivity of the two kingdoms, and even to announce that the people will take flight into Egypt, as they in fact do 175 years later, after the capture of Jerusalem.† The division of the two kingdoms appears to Hosea as the supreme evil, an evil not altogether beyond remedy, and which a second David would be able to arrest. Hosea was, it would appear, an Ephraimite; ‡ in reality, he was above the prejudices of both parties. A certain partiality for legitimacy drew him towards Judah, for he recognised only the king of David's line,§ but his patriotism is Israelite in the broadest sense.|| What proved the ruin of the northern kingdom was anarchy.¶ The dynasty of Jehu has disappeared, and none of the ephemeral usurpers who fight over the spoils are capable of taking its place.** Samaria attempts to form foreign alliances, passing from Assyria to Egypt, from Egypt to Assyria, offering gifts both to the one and to the other.†† This habit of coquetting first with one nation and

* Chapters v., vii., viii., ix., x., xi. more especially, xii., xiv.

† Hosea, ch. ix. v. 6; ch. x. v. 6. Compare ch. xi. v. 5. It must be borne in mind that the compilation was made *post eventum*, and that only the portions which had been verified were preserved.

‡ Ibid. ch. vii. v. 5.

§ Ibid. ch. iii. v. 5.

|| Ibid. ch. v. v. 8–11.

¶ Ibid. ch. iii. v. 4, 5.

** Ibid. ch. x. v. 3, 4; ch. xiii. v. 10, 11.

†† Ibid. ch. vii. v. 8 and following; ch. viii. v. 10; ch. xii. v. 2 and following; ch. xiv. v. 4.

then with another will have a bad ending, like all forbidden love intrigues and liaisons.*

Israel has a mission; it is a nation of a special character, being charged with a sacerdotal mission.† To act "like men,"‡ that is to say like all the rest of the world, is for Israel a sort of degradation. The division of Israel and of what is not Israel (the *goïm*) is clearly established.§ When Israel is unfaithful to Iahveh, it has committed adultery.|| This trope, repeated by all the succeeding prophets, appears for the first time in Hosea.

The austere censor, determined to paint everything in the darkest colours, sees nothing but religious corruption all about him.¶ The priests have deserted the worship of Iahveh, seeking only to enrich themselves with offerings. They live upon the sins of the people; they urge them, in order to profit thereby, to offer impure sacrifices,** for which they are afterwards punished.†† The king's house is as guilty as the priest's.‡‡ The king and the captains make a mock at piety.§§ The priests have committed murders at Shechem and Gilead.|||| There are even prophets who act dishonestly.¶¶ Idolatry and superstition are

* Hosea, ch. viii. v. 10. † Ibid. ch. iv. v. 6.

‡ Ibid. ch. vi. v. 7.

§ Ibid. ch. vii. v. 8; ch. viii. v. 10; ch. ix. v. 1.

|| Ibid. ch. i. ¶ Ibid. ch. iv. v. 1 and following.

** Ibid. ch. iv. v. 8, 9. †† Ibid. ch. iv. v. 16 and following

‡‡ Ibid. ch. v. v. 1.

§§ Ibid. ch. viii. v. 10; ch. ix. v. 15.

|||| Ibid. ch. vi., vii. ¶¶ Ibid. ch. iv. v. 5.

universal.* Gilgal, in the eyes of Hosea as of Amos, is a place of unholy worship.† The people asks oracles from pieces of wood.‡ The high places, where sacrifices and incense are offered, are the scenes of abominable acts,§ the women prostituting themselves in honour of Astarte; the priests commit fornication there with harlots, and sacrifice with them. Israel, in short, multiplies the altars in order to commit sin; its altars are for it so many opportunities for doing evil;|| its festivals, its sabbaths, and its new moon celebrations will be swept away. Bethel, called in irony *Beth awen*¶ or *Awen* (iniquity), Gilgal and Gilead more especially, are accursed. The thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars.** Oaths are taken by the life of Iahveh, but the rites are impure and illicit; Astarte, with her ignoble priests and priestesses, edges her way in by the side of the pure God. Let Judah, at all events, beware of these infamies. If not, slavery awaits them as it does Israel.††

Even when offered to Iahveh, sacrifices are a useless and inferior rite. Words, the sincere pledges

* Hosea, ch. xi. v. 2. *Baalim, fesilim.*

† Amos, ch. iv. v. 4; Hosea, ch. iv. v. 15; ch. ix. v. 15.

‡ Hosea, ch. iv. v. 12. § Ibid. ch. iv.

|| Ibid. ch. viii. v. 11; ch. x. v. 1, 2.

¶ House of iniquity or of naught. This pun has already appeared in Amos, ch. v. v. 5.

** Hosea, ch. iv. v. 15, 19; ch. ix. v. 15; ch. x. v. 5, 8; ch. xii. v. 12. Compare Amos, ch. iv. v. 4.

†† Ibid. ch. x. v. 11.

of repentance, are better than all the burnt offerings.* What pleasure can the Everlasting take in the slaughter of beasts which are afterwards eaten, in vain libations, in the "bread for their soul," which they would do much better to utilise for their households? † The fundamental dictum of progressive Judaism and of Christianity, "I desired mercy,‡ and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings," is from Hosea,§ and it was doubtless uttered before his day. We find the same idea, if not the same expressions, in Amos.||

Hosea is a thoroughly pure Iahveist.¶ He has a horror of figurative representations, of gods made with men's hands.** His essential epithet for Iahveh is *qados*, "saint;" once he appears to have called him *Qedosim*, in the plural, by analogy with the Elohim.†† Like Amos, Hosea very much affects the expression *elohé-has-sebaoth*, "God of Sabaoth." It may be said that, with Hosea, the idea of the divinity is superior to what it is with the Iahveist compiler of the Hexateuch. Iahveh is not represented by him as being moved by the unreflecting gusts of passion

* Hosea, ch. v. v. 6; ch. xiv. v. 3.

† Ibid. ch. viii. v. 13; ch. ix. v. 4.

‡ חסד.

§ Hosea, ch. vi. v. 8. || See above, pp. 363–365.

¶ Hosea, ch. iii. v. 4, *Zébah*, *masseba*, *ephod* and *teraphim* are placed on the same level, as portions of the legitimate worship. But allowance must be made for the poetic style.

** Ibid. ch. viii. v. 4–6.

†† Ibid. ch. xii. v. 1. Compare Proverbs, ch. ix. v. 10; ch. xxx. v. 3.

which formerly had led him to destroy humanity by the deluge, and Sodom by fire, only to repent him of it afterwards. The Iahveh of Hosea only grows angry for reasonable motives; it is his nature to be faithful, patient, prompt to forgiveness.* He has not the caprices in which the God of the ancient narratives indulges. Mythology is dead; the theology of Israel becomes rigidly proper. Iahveh loves the conversion of the heart, he prompts it even.† The prophet is the goad of Iahveh; the prophet's word kills,‡ but Iahveh wounds and dresses the wound; he strikes only to heal.

Thus we see that the later prophetism added nothing to Hosea, doing little more than repeat in more correct style what the Ephraimite prophet had uttered in a more or less rough form. Hosea is, at an interval of nearly a hundred years, the disciple of the Iahveist compiler. His interest in sacred history is very great; § he is acquainted with at least one Thora.|| His sacred history is the Iahveist narrative; his Thora is the Book of the Alliance. The genius of Israel produced in profound

* Hosea, ch. xi. v. 9; ch. xii. v. 7. Compare Micah, ch. vii. v. 18–20.

† Ibid. ch. v. v. 15; ch. vi. v. 1 and following.

‡ Ibid. ch. vi. v. 5.

§ Note especially ch. xii. v. 4, 5 (compare Genesis, ch. xxv. v. 26; ch. xxxii. v. 25 and following); ch. ix. v. 16 (compare Numbers, ch. xxv.).

|| Hosea, ch. viii. v. 12: אכתוב לו רבו תורתי. Read דבר תורתי and with the *matres lectionis*, דברי תורתי.

silence these works which were destined to create the astonishment of the future. Iahveism was, from the first half of the eighth century, a complete religion, the most perfect which there had hitherto been, and which has scarcely been excelled since. Morality has entered with flying colours into religion; to be the man of Iahveh, it is above all things needful to be a good man.*

* The last verse of Hosea.

CHAPTER XX.

RELIGIOUS SUPERIORITY OF JUDAH.—THE EARLY YEARS OF ISAIAH.

While making allowance, in the declamations of Amos, Hosea and the other prophets of the same period, for that exaggeration which is inevitable with the preacher who wants to enforce his words, it cannot be doubted that the northern kingdom had lapsed, after the fall of the house of Jehu, into a state of deep religious decadency. Iahveism, but imperfectly protected, became more and more confounded with idolatry. Sagacious men like Amos and Hosea saw clearly that this was due to the weakness of the royal house; and they came to the conclusion that the worship of a nation is only solidly established when it is protected by royalty.* They take pity on Samaria, which has not succeeded in founding a lasting dynasty; they arrive at the conclusion that the dynasty of David will alone represent the destiny of the race of Abraham. The theocratic and legendary rôle of David grows greater every

* Hosea, ch. iii. v. 4.

day. The separation of the northern tribes, which had at first appeared a political fact natural enough, became a schism, a religious crime. Judah is regarded as possessing a sort of legitimate title, from the double point of view of the worship of Iahveh and of royalty, two things which the prophets henceforth treat as inseparable.

The form of Iahveism which now is in process of taking root is very much like what Islamism will afterwards be. It consists mainly in austerity of life, in the suppression of luxury, in the imposition of a very strict code upon women; the whole of this being designed not as a private discipline, which each person accepted for himself and his family, but as a law of the State, placed in the keeping of the king and the princes. Society is one solid whole; Iahveh recompenses or punishes it *en bloc.* The virtuous man is responsible for the libertine; he risks being punished for the conduct of his neighbour, whom he is, therefore, obliged to supervise. Hence arose the habits which are the very contrary of modern liberalism and worldly morality as we understand it. Our fundamental principle is individual responsibility. You are free to be as severe as you please upon yourself, and to make as many proselytes to puritanism as you can; but you have no right to force it down other people's throats. The Quaker does not compel any one to turn Quaker; he does not ask the Government to protect Quakerism. Now the Iahveism of the prophets,

like Wahhabism, like the true Islam, implies penal coercion, the appeal to the secular arm in order to execute a moral code. The excesses of Pharisaism are born with Iahveism itself. The Jewish theocracy, of which Islamism or rather Wahhabism, Mahdism, etc., are the ultimate expression, had, as necessary consequences, the inquisition, the union of Church and State, mutual supervision. In history, drawbacks are inseparable from advantages. Good is often brought about by means which appear to be the complete negation of it, and that is why, according to the difference of the times, progress may consist, in one century, in combating that which in the previous century was itself progress.

The Iahveism of the prophets of the eighth century claiming to be absolute morality, it was natural that people should come to regard it as a religion good for all men, and to conceive the hope that every one would become converted to it. This idea, of which we have seen traces in Amos and the contemporary prophets,* will go on developing from year to year. Tyre, Egypt and even Asshur will come to Iahveh. Concern upon such a matter as this reminds one, I know, of a more modern epoch, during which proselytism became the dominant idea of Israel. Still, one cannot regard all the passages which contain these hardy predictions† as interpolated. Nearly all the great ideas of Israel have come into existence so

* See above, pp. 371, 375, 376, 379. † See above, p. 371, note §.

naturally that they do not appear, at first sight, to have had any beginning.

One man contributed in an eminent degree to the transformation which the Israelites' ideas underwent in the second half of the eighth century, and this was the prophet Jesaiah,* or Isaiah, son of Amos.† To a religious sentiment of the purest kind, Isaiah added rare literary talent. The *sir* had in ancient times produced great masterpieces, but the style was, so to speak, run out. The *masal* continued to flourish, but it was only applicable to certain orders of ideas. Jonah, son of Amittai, Amos and Hosea had created the oratorical lash destined for declamation, and the effect had been tremendous. But Jonah, son of Amittai, is merely a howler, his composition being one long outpouring of hatred. Hosea and Amos are frequently deficient in art; they are at times weak in their expressions, at others hard and harsh. The religious literature of the time had not got beyond Ennius; but Isaiah was to be the Virgil who would bring to maturity the rhythm created previous to his time. This form of preaching in cadence analogous

* In the book which bears Isaiah's name, first of all the chapters xl.–lxvi. must be struck out, as they are certainly by another author. In the first thirty-nine chapters, several important distinctions are necessary. Besides chapters xv. and xvi., which Isaiah states to be the work of a more ancient prophet, xiii., xiv., xxi., xxiv. to xxvii., xxxiv., xxxv. do not seem to be by him.

† There is nothing in common between this latter name and that of the prophet Amos. The Hebraic mode of spelling them is not the same.

to that of the Koran, which still gives so much force to the holy book of the Mussulmans when it is well recited, was never carried to greater perfection than in Isaiah. Isaiah is almost the only instance of a great religious creator who was at the same time a great writer.

Isaiah was not the only prophet of Judah at the critical period at which we have arrived.* Side by side with him, we find a certain Micah, or Mika, of Moreseth-Gath, who was evidently a person of considerable importance.† His ideas and his style have the greatest analogy with the style of Isaiah; there are, in fact, identical developments to be found in the writings of the two prophets.‡ The most eloquent passages of the prophetic school, which many knew by heart, had become a sort of common fund into which every one dipped.

Although Isaiah did not invent the beautiful religious formulæ which fill his writings, his place in the world's history is by no means usurped. He was the greatest of a race of giants. He gave their final form to Hebraic ideas. He is not the founder of Judaism; he is its classical genius. Semitic speech

* The chronological indication which is found in the titles of the books of Hosea, Isaiah and Micah, and which would attribute too long a career to these prophets, comes from an ancient collection which contains the prophecies of the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. It is as if we were to take a collection of the great French writers in the time of Louis XIV., XV. and XVI., which would naturally include Bossuet and Voltaire, and conclude therefore that Bossuet wrote in the reigns of Louis XV. and XVI., and Voltaire in the reign of Louis XIV.

† Jeremiah, ch. xxvi. v. 18.

‡ See below, p. 419.

reaches in him its highest combinations. Isaiah is a true writer; Mahomet is much his inferior. Isaiah writes like a Greek. The idea and the words with him attain that pitch of perfect ardour beyond which one feels that the latter will be meaningless or the former embarrassed.

Literary perfection of this kind implies schooling, and no doubt Isaiah was the product of a cultivation of language and ideas long since commenced.* He quotes and adopts for himself ancient prophecies, for instance that of Jonah, son of Amittai, against Moab,† and a fragment ‡ which is also attributed to Micah.§ It is probable that in many other cases, where we have had no means of verifying the matter, he merely repeated previous prophecies. According to all appearances, it was at Jerusalem that he received his training. There can be no doubt that older books, such as the Wars of Iahveh|| and Sacred History under its two forms, were known to him,¶ as well as to Micah.** The Book of the Alliance and no doubt

* According to 2 Chronicles, ch. xxvi. v. 22, ch. xxxii. v. 32, Isaiah was the historiographer of the reigns of Uzziah and Hezekiah. This is one of the bibliographical mistakes so common in the Chronicles.

† Chapters xv. and xvi. ‡ Isaiah, ch. ii. v. 1–4.

§ Micah, ch. iv. v. 1. Isaiah and Micah appear to have borrowed this passage from another writer. See Joel, ch. iv. v. 10 and following.

|| The day of Midian, ch. ix. v. 3.

¶ Isaiah, ch. i. v. 9; ch. iii. v. 9; ch. xi. v. 11, 15, 16.

** Micah, ch. vi. v. 4 and following. Abraham taken in the ethnographical sense, Micah, ch. vii. v. 20.

the Decalogue were in his eyes Thoras* revealed from God. The unflinching battle fought by Amos and Hosea made, it must be supposed, a deep impression upon him.

Life in a comparatively important centre such as Jerusalem and contiguity with royalty inspired him with a more dignified and moderate tone than that of the prophets in the time of Jeroboam II. and Uzziah. We shall find him, on several occasions, in communication with the court and a trusted adviser of the dynasty.† He did not, however, belong to the sacerdotal caste, and he did not scruple on occasion to depict the *cohanim* in a very disadvantageous light, as men who feast upon good things with the money of the Temple.‡ He was married and had children,§ his wife was entitled *han-nebia*,|| which was equivalent to what in the Middle Ages would be called priestess. Though holding no official title or function, he was for nearly fifty years the inspired soul, the acting conscience of Israel. There is not a page in his whole writings which is not in harmony with the circumstance of the time, which does not bear the stamp of the day, which is not the echo of a given situation, seen through the highly coloured glasses of a strong and concentrated passion.

* Isaiah, ch. v. v. 24.

† The legend of his royal descent rests only upon Rabbinic fables.

‡ Isaiah, ch. xxviii. v. 7.

§ Ibid. ch. vii. v. 3; ch. viii. v. 3, 14, 18.

|| Ibid. ch. viii. v. 3.

It never does, in ancient histories, to sacrifice the parts which shock us to those which are really admirable, nor to feel doubt about some parts in order to lighten the difficulties which one experiences in conciliating the whole. In becoming a religious founder and a tribune of justice, Isaiah did not altogether lay aside the garb of the old *nabi.* He is the Greek *mantis,* the diviner as well as the inspired writer. People come to him to learn about the future. Some of his utterances have a smack of pleasantry about them. Such, for instance, as his reply to the Arabs of Seir and Dumah, which amounts to "You want to know the time; be off with you,"* or that to the Kedarites, "In a year, beware."† There was such regularity in the Assyrian invasions, as they succeeded one another from year to year, that an attempt was made to forecast their return, like that of natural phenomena. There can be no doubt that Isaiah was very well informed, and that, aided by his singular powers of penetration, he had a very clear insight into the affairs of his time. Micah styles the prophets "the watchmen"‡ of Israel. Their houses were offices for the giving of consultations, to which the governing men of the day were bound to show the greatest consideration.

How was it possible for this man, whom we may fancy as a sort of ancient Armand Carrel or Emile de Girardin, very well up in current affairs and able to

* Isaiah, ch. xxi. v. 11, 12. † Ibid. ch. xxi v. 13–17.
‡ מצפים. Micah, ch. vii. v. 4.

give a vivid and caustic turn to his ideas—without ceasing to be a saint or a hero—to have recourse to *signs*, that is to say to miracles, by which Iahveh signalised his special action? It would be impossible to form the least comprehension of the great events of the past without admitting that the East and antiquity had their own peculiar conceptions of reason and honesty. Parts which in our day would necessitate a man's abandoning all claim to be considered a reasonable being were very readily filled in former ages by men whose nervous system worked in the same way as our own does. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jesus, St. Paul and Mahomet have all existed. The worst of all criticism is that which is obliged to remove their head or their heart, to explain what they were. Individual inspiration, the principle of Judaism and Protestantism, while of extraordinary creative power, has drawbacks which it is idle to gainsay. For the belief in inspiration being based solely upon the affirmation of the inspired person presupposes a great readiness on the part of the public to confide in the exercise of pure trickery. A number of great things are no doubt achieved by confidence; but, upon the other hand, how many acts of folly has blind confidence led to the commission of? The prophets who, in the first years of the occupation of Algeria, rose up every spring and promised their co-religionists the expulsion of the infidels, the mahdis, who are the endemic evil of Islam, have always found people to follow them. In a social

State, founded, like that of the ancient Hebrews, upon faith in the messenger of God, the most perplexing embarrassments and endless disputes were inevitable. There were inspired men to make the most contradictory announcements and orders; how was the true to be distinguished from the false prophet? The idea of a sign was the consequence of a dilemma like this.* The prophet who hoped to have a long career must be a miracle-worker at certain times.

Isaiah, so great in many ways, has some traits which one would like to forget. The diatribe against Shebna and the puff in favour of Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, border on the ridiculous. The petty symbolic dramas by which the prophets endeavour to render their ideas more forcible, the acts of extravagance which they induce Iahveh to order them to commit in order to impress the people, go even beyond the allowance we are inclined to make for the simple-minded ways of those ancient times. But all is forgiven when we reflect how prodigious was this situation of a man who was a living and permanent oracle of the nation, a kind of clock which people went to consult, a supernatural being all whose acts and words were of such importance that the constant observation was, "What did he say?" "What did he do?" This perpetual manifestation of the will of the national God by the mouth of a sort of squalid hermit, clothed in sackcloth,† is one of the

* Isaiah, ch. xxii. † Ibid. ch. xx. v. 2.

most surprising ideas which any human family ever conceived. Such a mode of life entailed, as a matter of necessity, posings, manœuvrings and dodges which we should qualify in the present day by much more severe names. Numa Pompilius, who, if he ever existed, was contemporary with Isaiah, did not show himself more scrupulous in his choice of methods. Egeria and Iahveh spoke the same language, that of the intimate conscience of the nation, interpreted by a tradition which was supposed never to err.

The secret of the extraordinary development of the people of Israel lay in this one institution. Prophetism has much that is really analogous with modern journalism, which is also an individual power—and in the main a beneficial power—concurrently with the government, the patriciate and the church. Israelite prophetism was a journalism speaking in the name of God. It was in turn the salvation and the ruin of dynasties. The prophets are at once model patriots and the worst enemies of their country. They prevent it from having a civil order, foreign alliances or an army. They bring to bear against the government an opposition which no State could withstand. And yet, in the long run, prophetism has created the historical importance of Israel. It was deleterious to the political life of the small people which entrusted its destinies to it; but it founded the religion of humanity. Who would be secure upon it?

One superiority, for instance, which these *nabis* of

the Iahveist school possessed was that they did not have recourse to any material method in their predictions, such as the *urim* and *thummim*. The inspiration of Iahveh stood in stead of all else. The classic prophets, if we may so style them, had a horror of sorcery, that is to say of prediction by so-called supernatural processes. Magic, carved images, statues, astartes and idols* are all much alike in their eyes. Superstition is the evil which they wage war upon with all their might. Contrary to the opinion of so many other sages, they never compound with it. In this sense, the Hebrew prophets are true Protestants, Reformers and Puritans. Not without reason were their writings the habitual literary food of the great agitators of the sixteenth century. Calvin, Knox and Cromwell are quite the brothers of the Israelite prophets of the eighth century B.C. They have their austerity, their spirit of absolutism, their dangerous simplicity. Inability to divide politics and religion is peculiar to both. Theocracy has its noble side, but it takes a long time for it to reach freedom.

* Micah, ch. iii. v. 6 and following; Isaiah, ch. viii. v. 19.

CHAPTER XXI.

COMPLETE EXPANSION OF PROPHETISM IN ISAIAH AND MICAH.

THE activity of Isaiah seems to have begun in the reign of Jotham.* He was a pious sovereign, whose reign appears to have left a good impression among the prophets. It is doubtful whether we have any writing by Isaiah which belongs to this period. Ahaz, on the contrary, who succeeded his father about 741, showed for foreign forms of worship a toleration which was much blamed, the ancient morals became much corrupted, the magistracy fell into a state of great abasement; rightly or wrongly, Isaiah accused it of making a traffic of the administration of justice.† The scribes drove away the poor from the tribunal and rendered unrighteous decrees.‡ The misfortunes of the period, especially the dark clouds which were gathering in

* The vision in chapter vi. is supposed to have taken place in the last year of Uzziah. This is difficult of admission. I shall treat of this chapter in vol. iii.

† Isaiah, ch. i. v. 23; ch. v. v. 23; ch. x. v. 1, 2.

‡ Ibid. ch. x. v. 1.

the direction of Nineveh, were, in accordance with the custom of the prophetic schools, turned to account as punishments or means of inspiring terror. One of the finest manifestoes of this ardent opposition, often no doubt unjust, is the solemn fragment which afterwards was thought so fine that it was made the first chapter of the Book of Isaiah.* These fiery programmes, these vague denunciations, which remind one in some ways of the violent utterances of modern radicals, were repeated several times during the reign of Ahaz. One of the finest manifestoes of Isaiah is that which may be called the Surate of the Vine,† a splendid piece of sacred literature, the type of prophetic preaching at the epoch of its greatest perfection. The author is desirous of proving that the aim of Iahveh, in taking pains that Israel should be educated as a holy people, was the triumph of justice. The obstacle to justice are the rich, the great landowners, the worldly, who lead a dissipated life. All this is expressed in a style full of imagery, and of allusions many of which we fail to understand. All the surates of the first epoch of Isaiah are of the same lofty and energetic tone. It is the tone of an austere moralist, who is reproving a society which is diseased, and who sometimes takes for symptoms of disease what is only a necessity of the times.‡ Isaiah's hatreds are

* Isaiah, ch. i. v. 2 to end. † Ibid. ch. v.

‡ See more especially the whole fragment comprising chapters ii., iii., iv., with the exception of the first four verses in chapter ii., which occur again in Micah and are here out of their proper place.

those of all the prophets, being excited by anything which would involve Israel in the general movement of humanity, relations with foreign countries, riches, luxury, chariots, the external attributes of force. Iahveh alone is great. He delights in humiliating the rich and mighty, in abasing that which is lofty, the cedars of Lebanon, the oaks of Bashan, the high hills. Pride is the greatest of crimes. Not to put trust in man is an act of piety and also of wisdom, inasmuch as anything which rests on merely human aid is in great danger of falling. Iahveh hates the vessels of Tarshish; he likes to break in pieces all objects of luxury. One of the reasons why he loves to overthrow idols is because idols are objects of art, made of precious materials. Adornments and female coquetry are almost as much to be condemned as idolatry. The ideal of Isaiah is a nun clothed in black and walking with eyes upon the ground. The fine ladies of Jerusalem are spoken of by him in very scathing terms, notably in the third chapter (verses 16–24). His discontent with the government shows itself at every line, as in verse 12 of the same chapter: "As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them." The leaders carry the people astray; the rich are idolatrous, and rob the poor. In the farther future, the prophets foresee a still worse state of things, what in modern language we should call the revolution. The principal men having been thrust aside, the country will be delivered over to the rule of infatua-

tion and inexperience.* It will be enough for a man to have clothing for his brethren to say: "Be thou our ruler." But he will refuse, saying: "I have in my house neither bread nor water; make me not a ruler of the people."

The day of judgment and justice will not long tarry. Men will go in fear to hide themselves in the holes of the rocks, in the caves of the earth.† All that is human will come to naught. Justice will reign; each man will be treated according to his deserts.‡ Amid the destruction of Israel, there will be a remnant, a graft, an offshoot, which will cause the race of saints to multiply afresh. Zion will become a new Sinai, with a cloud by day, and a flame of fire by night, and beneath the shelter of this divine glory, the people of the just will be happy for all eternity.§

This brilliant future is the perspective upon which the eyes of the Seer are ever fixed. A short oracle which the prophetic school was fond of repeating, and which was attributed at times to Isaiah, at others to Micah, gave expression to the indomitable hope which made of Jerusalem the religious capital of the world.‖

Glory be to the Hebrew genius, which yearned and besought with unparalleled force for the end of the evil

* Isaiah, ch. iii. v. 4 and following.
† Ibid. ch. ii. v. 19 and following.
‡ Ibid. ch. iii. v. 11, 12.
§ Ibid. ch. iv. v. 2 and following.
‖ Ibid. ch. ii. v. 2–4; Micah, ch. iv. v. 1–3.

times, and saw rising upon the horizon, amid the fearful darkness of the Assyrian world, that sun of justice which is alone capable of making war to cease among men! This was, no doubt, a sheer utopia. The men of peace dreamt of by the prophet were destined to be more fatal to the world than the most brutal of the men of war. In order to avoid the great evil of being obliged to "learn war"—and a great evil it is, no doubt—Isaiah and Micah founded theocracy. Now as Iahveh could not exercise a direct government, his reign would have been that of the Iahveist party—a reign all the more tyrannical because carried on in the name of heaven.

Authority is all the sterner when the source of it is believed to be divine. It is better to have to do with the soldier than the priest, for the soldier has no metaphysical pretensions. From the point of view of the philosophy of history, the sacred policy of Isaiah can only be admitted subject to a considerable amount of reservation. But, theocracy being once eliminated, there remain goodness and reason, there remains the important truth that science and justice, applied to the government of the world, can improve it very much. This hope, which is ardently caught up by the Sibyllists of Alexandria, which warns and sustains the tender and drooping Virgil, from which Jesus and his followers derive their assertion of the approaching appearance of God's kingdom, is born of Isaiah, or rather of the stubbornly optimist school which was the first to sound in the ears

of humanity the cry of justice, of fraternity, and of peace.

This is one of the origins of idealism, and we can but greet its dawn. The victory of the prophets is one of the few victories which men who care for things of the mind have gained. Let us contrast the Greece of the fifth century with the Israel of the eighth century B.C. Israel, even at that early epoch, saw very clearly the absurdity of idolatry—that gigantic mistake of which the Aryan race could not steer clear when it found itself in contact with races which practised the plastic arts. The folly of man "casting himself down before the work of his hands —adoring that which his fingers have fashioned," appeared to the enlightened Israelites as the height of absurdity. They were struck by the absurdity of the good little gods who carried about with them the knicknacks of the house and of the tent. The wise made mock of this, and advised that all this should be cast into the dust-hole, to keep company with the moles and the bats. The idea that the *nabi* derived his inspiration from Iahveh was also destined to die away with the silly practices of sorcery. This is one of the great differences of Aryan and Semitic development. Among the Greeks and the Romans, as among the modern peoples to the sixteenth century, the aristocracy showed great weakness for the gross superstitions and ideas of the masses. Among the Hebrews, the leading intelligences made war to the death on superstition, and

were, in the end, successful. In Europe this does not occur until the Reformation of the sixteenth century, which must be looked upon as a recrudescence of the Hebrew spirit, brought about by the reading of the Bible. It is the last flicker of that spirit of which the school of Isaiah was the highest and clearest manifestation.

Sacrifices were the shameful stain which humanity preserved of its primitive vain terror, of its stupid and degraded anxiety to appease imaginary deities. We have seen how Isaiah treated this fundamental practice of religion. Micah is not less plain-spoken.* The Iahveh of Hosea, as we have seen, is a purely moral being; the Iahveh of Isaiah and of Micah shows the tenderness of the Heavenly Father of the Christians. At times he assumes a tearful tone which adumbrates the affectionate reproaches of Jesus: "Oh, my people, what have I done unto thee?"† One is tempted to say, "Poor fellow!" The weeping God whom Christianity will love, the God who is made unhappy and is afflicted when he is offended, and who, like a good father, looks for the return of the sinner, already exists in embryo. Iahveh is already, as regards the way in which he is pitied and the way in which he is treated, a sad victim of crucifixion.

At the same time true prayer is born. The pious man is horrified at the contortions, the convulsions, the frenzied dancing, the incisions in the forehead, and the hacking with razors affected by the priests of

* Micah, ch. vi. v. 6 and following. † Ibid. ch. vi. v. 3.

Baal and of Chemosh. The new God is so essentially the God of goodness that all pure souls find themselves naturally in contact with him. He loves sincere and honest men; he hearkens to them. It is doubtful whether we possess the psalms of that day. But the spirit of inward meditation which has made of the Psalms the Prayer-book of humanity is already in existence. This spirit may be summed up in the different meanings of the word *siah*, signifying at once to meditate, to speak in a low tone, to speak to oneself, to hold converse with God, to be lost in the vague recesses of the infinite.*

It is, above all, by the conception of Providence and of social justice that the Hebrew development differed so distinctly from that of our races. These races were always content to put up with a somewhat halting justice in the government of the universe. Their assured conviction of another life furnished them with abundant compensation for the iniquities of their present condition. The Hebrew prophet, on the contrary, never appeals to rewards and punishments beyond the grave. He hungers for justice, and for speedy justice. According to him, it is here below that the justice of Iahveh prevails. An unjust world is, in his eyes, a monstrosity. What! There is a doubt as to Iahveh being all-powerful? This gives birth to an heroic tension, a sustained cry, an unceasing attention to the events of the world, all regarded as acts of a just-dealing God. Hence, above all, arises an ardent

* Genesis, ch. xxiv. v. 63.

belief in a final reparation, in a day of judgment, when things will be established as they should be. That day will witness the overthrow of what now exists. That will be the radical revolution, the revenge of the weak, the confusion of the mighty. The miracle of the transformation of the world will be wrought at Zion. Zion will be the capital of a regenerated world in which justice will reign. David will become, on that day, the ideal king of humanity.

These ideas prevailed in Israel from the very earliest times. Like all the fundamental ideas of a people, they were born with the people itself. The prophetic school personified in Elijah and Elisha brought them, as far back as the ninth century B.C., into very bold relief. In the first half of the eighth century, Amos, Hosea and others of the same school sounded their praises with extraordinary power, in a vigorous but strange and harsh style. About 740, these truths became the peculiar appanage of Jerusalem. Isaiah, by the ardour of his convictions, by the example of his life, and by the beauty of his style, gave them unparalleled lustre. He is the true founder (I do not say the inventor) of the messianic and apocalyptic doctrine. Jesus and the apostles merely repeated what Isaiah had said. A history of the origin of Christianity, if begun at the time when the primitive Christian ideas were formed, would have to begin with Isaiah.

CHAPTER XXII.

AGONY OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

A PECULIAR feature in the history of the Hebrew people is this, that each religious crisis coincided with a crisis of the nationality. Christianity was born amid the terrible fever which the establishment of the Roman power caused in Judæa, in the first century of our era. Judaism, as a distinct religion, was born while the nation was in the grip of Assyria during the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. The unvarying habit of the Hebrew prophets to see in the great events of the world acts of Iahveh's policy,* gave a sort of religious consecration to this empire. We have seen † the Assyrian armies transformed into forces which obey the distant signal of Iahveh. Asshur will henceforth be the converging point of all the prophetic visions. Iahveh is so powerful a God that whatever is mighty in this world is doing his work unconsciously and even involuntarily.

The ceaseless petty wars between the kings of

* פֹּעַל יהוה. † See Isaiah, ch. v. v. 26.

Judah, Israel and Damascus went on. Rezin, king of Damascus, who appears to have been one of the most undaunted organisers of the resistance made by Syria to Asshur, and Pekah, king of Israel, who was struggling in a feeble sort of way against the anarchy of the northern tribes, marched against Jerusalem (about 730 B.C.). The house of David was placed in great jeopardy. Pekah and Rezin were bent upon dethroning Ahaz and putting in his place a regent who is only known to us by his father's name, "the son of Tabeal."* It is perhaps Rezin who is meant by this name.† The ultimate idea of the confederates was probably to enlist Judah in a league of all the forces of Syria against the Assyrian Empire. The kingdom of Judah was in imminent risk of ruin. The Philistines, taking advantage of the difficulties of the hour, shook off the sort of vassaldom into which they had fallen with regard to Jerusalem.‡ The Syrians, encamped in Ephraim, spread indescribable terror among the household of Ahaz, and among the people.§

Isaiah‖ played an important part at this juncture. As the divine right of the House of David was in his eyes a dogma, he posed himself as an uncom-

* Isaiah, ch. vii. v. 6.

† Compare Tabrimmon, Damascene name. See, however, Oppert's *Ann. de Phil. Chrét.*, March, 1869.

‡ Isaiah, ch. xiv. v. 28–32. The note "in the year of the death of Ahaz" is false, like nearly all the comments of the same kind. Compare 2 Chronicles, ch. xxviii. v. 18.

§ Ibid. ch. vii. v. 2. ‖ Ibid. ch. vii., viii., ix. v. 1–6.

promising legitimist. Ahaz was far from being a sovereign after his own heart; but he none the less brought into play all the resources of his art in order to save him. He was inspired to go, with his son, to meet Ahaz at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, in the highway of the Fuller's Field,* where the king was superintending fortifications being put up to arrest the march of the Assyrians. In accordance with a habit general among the prophets, Isaiah gave his son a symbolical name, *Shear-Jasub*, "Ruins will return," which meant: "Israel shall perish, nothing but ruins will remain; they will be converted."† Isaiah recites to the king a fine prophetic rhapsody,‡ in order to reassure him, to win him away from foreign alliances, and persuade him to leave himself wholly and solely in the care of Iahveh. He even gave Ahaz a singular sign of this: "Behold a woman with child. In a few months she will bear a son, *Immanu-el.*§ Before he reaches years of discretion, Syria and

* Towards the small basin now called the Virgin's Fountain. Perhaps the defensive works which Ahaz was superintending may have been the conduit which brings the waters of the upper pool (the Virgin's Fountain) to the lower pool (the basin of Siloé). This water was thus protected from the enemy. The Siloé inscription must, in any event, be assigned the date of about 740 B.C. The best reproduction published of this curious inscription is in the *Zeitschrift der d. m. Gesellschaft*, 1882, p. 725. Compare *Journal des Débats*, April 16, 1882.

† Compare Isaiah, ch. x. v. 21.

‡ Isaiah, ch. vii. v. 4–9.

§ "God is with us!" That is to say: "In a few months, all will be well with us."

Ephraim shall be crushed. But beware, for the allies whom you have called in to your aid will crush you in turn. Egypt and Assyria will destroy Judah."

The imagination of the prophet could see nothing but disaster. One day* he was seen walking about the streets of Jerusalem, like men with placards at the present day, carrying a roll, upon which were written in large letters the two symbolic names, *Maher shalal* (prompt to plunder), and *Hagh-baz* (plunder quickly). As faithful witnesses of what was to follow, he took with him Uriah the prophet,† and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.‡ He then went to the prophetess, his wife, and told her that God had ordered that the son about to be born to her should be called these two names. "For before the child shall have knowledge so much as to say *papa* and *mamma*,"§ said the prophet, "the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria." It was impossible to express himself in more striking terms. The tunnel (*siloh*) which had just been dug to bring water from the spring of Giheon to the pool of the gardens, or the lower pool, supplied him with another expressive simile:‖ "For as much as this people

* Isaiah, ch. viii. v. 1 and following.

† See the incident of the altar, below, p. 432.

‡ Perhaps the author of Zechariah, chapters ix., xi. See above, p. 391.

§ *Abi* and *Immi.*

‖ Isaiah, ch. viii. v. 6 and following. See above, p. 427.

refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son . . . the Euphrates shall come and fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel." What avail is help from without? Iahveh dwells in Zion. In him alone must the people trust.

Ahaz did not pay any heed to the advice of Isaiah. Unknown, doubtless, to the prophet, he treated with the Assyrians.* He sent a message to Tiglath-Pilezer (Touklat-habal-asar II.) king of Nineveh, in which he described himself as his servant and his son, begging him to come and deliver him from the hand of the king of Aram (Syria), and of the king of Israel, who had attacked him. Ahaz sent at the same time to the king of Assyria all the gold and silver to be found in the Temple and the royal palace. When all the gold and silver had been exhausted, Ahaz had recourse to the works of art which were the glory of Solomon's house, as well as to the borders of the bases, while the brazen oxen were removed from under the brazen sea which they supported. It is very possible that the masterpieces of Solomon's art were thus removed as trophies of victory, and are still buried beneath the ruins of the palaces of Khorsabad, just as Rome and Antioch had the relics of Herodian art. Ahaz stripped of their ornaments, for the same purposes, the court for the sabbath and the king's entry without, which were decorated with the finest works of sculpture.

* Micah, ch. vi. v. 3.

Thus the formidable machine of the Assyrian army was once more set in motion and attracted to the regions of the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon. The narrow-minded selfishness of the court of Jerusalem was probably not the sole cause of the expedition. Nineveh, like Rome in after years, enjoyed making these triumphal appearances, which were the intermittent token of her remote power. Rezin and Pekah, learning of the attack about to be made upon them, went away from Jerusalem.* Rezin moved southward in order to win the Edomites over to the league of resistance against Asshur. He took the city of Elath from the Judaites and restored it to Edom. The approach to the Red Sea was from that time closed to the kingdom of Judah.†

The Assyrian invasion made its force first felt at Damascus.‡ Tiglath-Pilezer seized it, sent the inhabitants captive to Kir,§ and slew Rezin. He then ravaged all the north of the kingdom of Israel, capturing all the cities of Galilee and Gilead, and removing a great part of the population of these districts into Assyria. He resided during the whole of the expedition at Damascus; and Ahaz repaired there, and recognised him as his suzerain.

Thus Judah had his revenge over Israel, but at

* Episode of Oded, 2 Chronicles, ch. xxviii.; doubtful, to say the least of it.

† 2 Kings, ch. xvi. v. 6. For discussion of the text, see Thenius.

‡ Schrader, *Die Keil.*, p. 263, and following.

§ An unknown district, probably not far from the Euphrates.

the cost of his independence. Isaiah was enabled to wash his hands of the results of a policy against which he had protested. In the meanwhile, all his grudges were satisfied, and all his predictions were realised,* with Damascus in ruins, the cities beyond Jordan ceasing to exist, and the fortress of Ephraim (that is to say, Samaria) humiliated. Aram and Israel have perished together. Why has Israel forgotten the true God and worshipped after his own ideas? Let him abandon his gods made with men's hands, his *hammanim* and his *aserim*, and all will be forgiven him. If not, the northern kingdom will disappear altogether, eaten up by anarchy, and crushed between the Philistines and Aram.† The true Israel will be saved by Judah. Zion will endure; it is the resort of the humble, of the true disciples of Iahveh.‡

The prophet manifested in all this a rare degree of sagacity. He had the perspicacity to see that the kingdom of Jerusalem would outlast the northern kingdom. Deliverance will come first for Galilee, Zebulun and the land of Naphthali,§ and then the light shall shine over all Palestine.‖ This enigmatic description was perhaps applied to some child of royal

* Two fragments, from ch. ix. v. 7, to ch. x. v. 4; and ch. xvii. v. 1, 2.

† Isaiah, ch. ix. v. 2.

‡ עניים. Ibid. ch. xiv. v. 32.

§ Ibid. ch. viii. v. 22, is directly connected with ch. ix. v. 1 and following.

‖ Ibid. ch. ix. v. 6, 7.

descent upon whom the legitimists of that day built great hopes, or, again, it may have been the imaginary sketch of an ideal king such as the Iahveist may have dreamed of who would come and console the disappointed prophet.

All the events of history, in passing through the conscience of Israel, thus assumed a religious tinge, and Israel may be said to have written *Universal History* 2,500 years before Bossuet. In reality, religion had little to do with these wars of Nineveh, Damascus and Samaria, and it was the prophets who caused it to be mixed up with them. It must not be believed that these were the sentiments of the whole nation. The religious condition of the people was very commonplace, not much in advance of what had gone before. The beautiful language of the Iahveist and the Elohist, the Book of the Alliance and the Decalogue, had but a small number of readers. The Surates of the prophets were scarcely yet written; the voices of these inspired men were lost in a sort of desert. Ahaz introduced into religion an eclecticism bordering upon indifference. Having gone to Damascus to do homage to Tiglath-Pilezer, he saw there a form of altar which took his fancy.* He had the fashion and pattern of it copied and sent to Urijah the priest at Jerusalem, for the latter to have one made like it. Urijah complied with the king's order, and placed the altar in front of the other one. The king, upon his

* 2 Kings, ch. xvi. v. 10, and following.

return, went to the Temple to make his offerings, his libations, and his sacrifices. Dissatisfied with the course which Urijah had adopted, he insisted upon his altar being placed as near the Temple as possible and upon the blood of all the sacrifices being offered thereon.

Urijah did as the king commanded him, but these innovations had a very bad effect. Ahaz left an extremely bad reputation behind him among the pious Iahveists. It was considered that he had neglected the worship of Iahveh, because he had allowed it to be conducted upon the high places and among the groves where Astarte was associated with him. And what, if true, was still more serious, he caused his eldest son to be burnt to Moloch,* an abomination which was not at that time without precedent,† at all events outside Israel. The evocation of the dead was in general practice during his reign,‡ and sorcery prevailed.§

Reduced, weakened, and deprived of its northern provinces and those beyond Jordan,|| the kingdom of Israel was entering upon the period of convulsions which precedes death. Pekah came to the same end as most of the sovereigns of Israel. He was assassi-

* 2 Kings, ch. xvi. v. 3. Acts of this kind were frequent under Manasseh and Hamon. The historiographers being bent upon placing Ahaz among these evil kings, it is natural that they should have attributed this crime to him. It would be surprising if no trace of it were to be found in Isaiah.

† Micah, ch. vi. v. 7.

‡ Isaiah, ch. viii. v. 19.

§ Isaiah, Micah.

|| Micah, ch. vii. v. 14.

nated by Hoshea, son of Elah, in circumstances which lead to the supposition that the country was in a state of utter disorder. Hoshea succeeded Pekah, but there are reasons for supposing that he did not assume the royal title for several years after the civil war. The opinion of the prophets was only partially hostile to him, or at all events it judged him less severely than it had done his predecessors.* At about the time when he consolidated his authority, Ahaz died at Jerusalem, and he was succeeded by his son Hezekiah (about 725 B.C.).

* 2 Kings, ch. xvii. v. 2.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CAPTURE OF SAMARIA.

Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he ascended the throne. His mother's name was Abi, and she was the daughter of one Zachariah. Hezekiah was not at that time the deeply religious man which he afterwards became. There is nothing to show that there was the least difference between him and his father Ahaz. The tone of the prophets Micah and Isaiah was precisely the same that it had been in the previous reign.

Micah, more particularly, is very severe upon the king and upon the upper classes of society in Jerusalem.* The priests teach for hire, and the false prophets divine for money.† The world, in Micah's view, is divided into two classes of men, the rich and the holy. The former are in power, and take advantage of this to commit all sorts of iniquities; the latter are ever being victimised. Fraud, false weights, rapine and exactions, these are the practices of the rich. The people is, as it were, in a stew-

* Micah, ch. iii. v. 1–4, 11, 12; ch. iv. v. 9; ch. vi. v. 9–16; ch. vii. v. 1–6.

† Ibid. ch. iii. v. 11.

pan, sucked dry, emaciated by the spoilers, who flay the skin off them and strip their bones. The good Israelites are ruined by process for debt; they come away naked from the court; the judges are without mercy. Judgment is given for reward; the nobles and the great bleed the people to death. Things were different at an earlier period when some good men were still left.* The state of internal dissolution in the kingdom of Israel was at its height. Shalmaneser,† the successor of Tiglath-Pilezer, was ruler of all Western Asia. Hoshea began by recognising his suzerainty and paid him tribute. But he secretly continued his intrigues, endeavouring to form a league with So, the king of Egypt, of the twenty-fifth dynasty (Ethiopian). He abruptly ceased paying tribute, knowing doubtless what the consequences of such a step would be. A very beautiful passage in Isaiah,‡ full of obscure allusions and indecipherable pseudonyms, appears to date from this period.

Ephraim is compared to a carouse of drunkards crowned with flowers, but with flowers which fade. The judges, priests and prophets of Judah are also gone out of the right way. They do not see clearly, their vision is darkened. The tables are full of their vomit, and they exclaim like men overcome with wine: *Kav la-kav, sav la-sav,*§ making mock of the true prophets,

* Micah, ch. vii. v. 1–6. Compare ch. iii. v. 8.

† The Shalmaneser V. of the Assyriologists.

‡ Isaiah, ch. xxviii. Compare ch. xxx.

§ "Line upon line, precept upon precept."

who are constantly bringing them fresh commands from Iahveh.

Yes, it is so. It is by people that stutter* that God will speak to this nation. He will speak Assyrian to it.† Instead of following a prudent policy as the prophets advised, these feather-headed people were full of agitation and mockery. Woe unto them!

The partisans of war to the knife said, in their exaggerated way, that they had made a covenant with death, and were in agreement with hell. They put their trust in Egypt. The alliance of Egypt, says the prophet, is only lies and deception. There is but one sound stronghold, and that is Zion; it is Zion, not the material fortress which rises above the valley of Kidron, but the ideal Zion built upon righteousness and justice.‡ All else is of no account, the covenant with death, the contract with hell, are all nonsense. The Assyrian scourge will crush down everything; let Judah beware, for the solemn hour of the judgment of Iahveh is at hand.

Unhappy Ephraim was, in truth, at its last gasp. Joseph was evidently undone. A terrible storm was gathering over Syria. Tyre and the whole of Phœnicia rose against the dominion of Assyria. Shalmaneser hastened to come and crush the nations

* That is to say in a foreign tongue. The word "foreigner" in nearly all languages means "stuttering." See *De l'Origine du Langage*, p. 178 and following.

† That is to say: "He shall reply to it with an Assyrian invasion."

‡ Isaiah, ch. xxviii. v. 17.

with his powerful organisation. Tyre, as it appears, was cut off from its communications with the mainland.* Siege was laid to Samaria.† Jerusalem was, no doubt, being very closely watched. The Assyrian sieges lasted for years,‡ for one town was built against another,§ and a single attack with the battering ram extended over several days. The emotion during a long crisis of this kind was intense, as we can imagine, if we picture the siege of Paris lasting five years instead of five months. We do not quite know what was said in Samaria during the investment, for the voice of prophetism was much weakened at about this time. But the two small prophetic volumes which bear the names of Isaiah and Micah have preserved for us the manifestoes which were circulated at Jerusalem. It was generally anticipated that the colossus, after having wreaked his anger upon Samaria, would turn with all his might upon Judah.||

* This siege of Tyre is not an absolutely proved fact. It only rests upon a passage from Menander of Ephesus, quoted by Josephus (*Ant.*, IX. xiv. 2), and upon chapter xxiii. of Isaiah, the authenticity of which is doubtful, and which, after all, implies only a threat, or wish. In the passage from Menander there is certainly a mention of war being made by the Assyrians against Tyre, but it is Josephus who identifies that campaign with Shalmaneser. It was by mistake that a souvenir of this siege of Tyre was thought to have been discovered in the bas-reliefs of Khorsabad.

† 2 Kings, ch. xvii. v. 3.

‡ Compare Herodotus, II. 157.

§ 2 Kings, ch. xix. v. 32; representations of Khorsabad.

|| Micah, ch. i. v. 9, 15.

Isaiah, whose active mind was constantly travelling beyond the borders of Judæa, thought that he knew the secret of Iahveh's designs, and expounded them with astonishing precision. He had a threat for all the peoples which were about to engage in the struggle. He weighed carefully the span of life left to each of them, and he found it in each case short. Moab has only three years to live.* The siege of Tyre engaged his attention more especially. He held that the issue of it would be fatal to the city; and upon this hypothesis he gave free vent to his concentrated rancour:

Howl, ye ships of Tarshish! †

The anger of the extreme Iahveists against the Phœnician cities almost made them forget their own perils. ‡ These cities represented in their eyes the profane civilisation, which was the antipodes of the patriarchal idea. The ancient condemnation passed upon Canaan disturbed all their ideas.§ By a strange interversion, the Phœnicians were to the Jews what the Jews now are to the thoroughpaced Germans. The idea that Tyre is about to be destroyed elicits from the prophet of Jerusalem a great shout of joy. Tyre is so wicked. She supplies the whole world

* Isaiah, chapters xv. and xvi.

† Ibid. ch. xxiii. There are doubts as to the authenticity of this chapter. Several errors are noticeable, especially in verses 1 and 2. מבוא=מבית, a variation introduced. See p. 47, note §.

‡ Compare Zechariah, ch. ix.

§ Isaiah, ch. xxiii. v. 11. See, however, Amos, ch. ii. v. 9.

with corn; the wealth of the nations is concentrated in her hands; her merchants are princes; her traders form everywhere the aristocracy. What an insult to Iahveh! This city distributes the crowns;* just as if such a privilege did not appertain to Iahveh. So it is Iahveh who decrees her ruin. He has decreed it to stain the pride of all beauty, to bring into contempt all the mighty of the earth.† Iahveh is a jealous God; he takes an ill-natured pleasure in humiliating human splendour. Nahum, a century later, also represents commerce as an idolatrous pagan work.‡ The gloomy ideal of the prophets, analogous to that of the Scotch Puritans, inspired them with a sombre hatred for the brilliant civilisation of the Phœnician cities. They were bitter in their detestation of the gay and animated life led there,§ and they were ever musing over impossible conversions.

According to Isaiah, Tyre will be desolate for seventy years, and after that she will begin again her calling as a harlot; but this new profit shall be devoted to Iahveh; the servants of Iahveh (the priests in Jerusalem) shall benefit thereby. Tyre, in short, will embrace Iahveism. Her merchants,

* Verse 8. I should prefer המעטרהו, "the crown," allusion to the crenelated head, or to the mural crown of Tyre, a symbol which may have been very much anterior to the coins upon which it is stamped. Compare Psalms lx. v. 9; cviii. v. 9. The idea of representing cities as young girls is a very ancient one, and is perhaps the explanation of the expressions *Bath-sor*, *Bath-Sion*.

† Verse 9. ‡ Nahum, ch. iii. v. 4.

§ Isaiah, ch. xxiii. v. 7, 12.

having become rich proselytes, will come and pay sumptuous devotions at Jerusalem. The priests, enriched by these foreigners, will have fine vestments and will eat and drink to their fill.*

As regards Egypt, the prophetic anger was not less pronounced. Iahveh will visit Egypt,† and the idols of that land have already begun to tremble. Iahveh's plan is to bring about a civil war which will arm the different kingdoms of Egypt one against the other, and as a consequence of which the country will be handed over to a hard taskmaster.‡ The confusion, in the meanwhile, is very great. Tanis has a separate dynasty connected with the ancient kings; Memphis puts forward a similar claim, and all are afflicted with the same folly. Like Tyre, Egypt will one day adopt the worship of Iahveh, and then she will be saved.

Once more a prey to his favourite dream, the seer has no sort of limit to his hopes, and, as his horizon grows larger, he announces the future union of the peoples in the worship of Iahveh. Asshur, Egypt and Israel form a sort of religious trio.§

* See above, p. 371, note §, and p. 406. Too much attention must not be paid to the suspicions which passages of this kind engender. The prophecy against Tyre, if it raises grave objections, has one very strong mark of authenticity about it, viz., that it was not accomplished. Sidon and Tyre are as yet indistinct. Verses 6 and 7 correspond exactly with the emigration which gave birth to Carthage.

† Isaiah, ch. xix. v. 18–20 (first half) are interpolated, probably during the Ptolemaic epoch. These interpolations may have been facilitated by the formula ביום ההוא, authentic in verses 16, 23, 24.

‡ No doubt Assyria. § Isaiah, ch. xix. v. 23–25.

Such were the chimeras with which Isaiah avenged himself for the crushing weight which bore him down. National distress raises up prophets, by compelling ardent minds to fall back upon the pleasures of imagination, which are the only real ones. Micah is more oppressed even than Isaiah by the misfortunes of the present, but yet for him also the dim future is luminous. The coming fate of Jerusalem is written in that of Samaria. Samaria and Jerusalem are both equally to blame,* but the former will receive the first blow, and Judah's turn will come afterwards. Jerusalem will be destroyed, the hill of the Temple will become as the high places of the forest.† His king will not serve him (Hezekiah had not yet been won over to the prophetic movement). Zion will be defiled, and the inhabitants will be carried away to Babylon.‡ But Jacob will have his revenge; he will crush those who crush him, and consecrate their spoils to Iahveh. A strong sovereign of the House of Bethlehem, a second David, will reunite the exiles with those who had remained in the land, to make a new people of them. Then will commence the era of justice. Jerusalem will be the centre of an empire of which Egypt and Assyria will be tributaries. If Asshur makes fresh invasions, its forces will be driven back even to its land of Nimrud. The

* Micah, ch. i.

† Ibid. ch. iii. v. 12. Compare Jeremiah, ch. xxvi. v. 18.

‡ Ibid. ch. iv. v. 10. Babylon formed part of the kingdom of Assyria. The captives may have been sent to the land near the Euphrates. This was probably the land of Kir.

rebellious people will be exterminated, and will revert shamefaced, full of contrition and fear, to the worship of Iahveh. In those days, horses, chariots, citadels, fenced cities, will disappear; and these military frivolities will be looked upon as the remnants of a vanished world, a world based upon pride.* Peace will henceforth reign in a world which, with Zion for its capital, will taste perfect peace.†

The news which reached Jerusalem from Samaria confirmed and perhaps inspired these heated predictions. Samaria succumbed after an investment lasting three years (721). Shalmaneser was dead, and the completion of the campaign was the work of his successor Sargon.‡ Hoshea fell into the hands of the conquerors, and was cast into prison.§ Assyrian governors were placed in authority over the country.||

The anticipations of Isaiah (with whom the wish would seem to have been father to the thought) were not fulfilled as regards Tyre. A blockade of five years was not sufficient to reduce the island city. Egypt was also exempted from the scourge, and Jerusalem does not appear on this occasion to have suffered very much. The kingdom of Judah was, as

* Compare Zechariah, ch. ix. v. 10, etc.; Deuteronomy, ch. xvii. v. 16.

† Read the whole of Micah, ch. iv. Compare ch. ii. v. 12, 13, and Isaiah, ch. ii.

‡ Compare Schrader, *Die Keil.*, pp. 271–285.

§ 2 Kings, ch. xlii. v. 4. The narrative of the Book of Kings would seem here to be prophetic.

|| Schrader, p. 172.

nearly always happens, rewarded for its prudent, not to say cowardly conduct. It had abandoned its brother, and it still continued to live for nearly a century and a half. During this period, it was, in reality, the vassal of Assyria; but a state of vassaldom is not unsuitable to a people little fitted for political life, and with the best chance of effecting great things when others dispense it from the performance of the rude tasks by which a nation builds up and upholds its power.

The city of Samaria does not appear to have been destroyed as a result of its conquest;* but, deprived of its kings and of the most notable part of its population, it shared the fate of abandoned capitals, and soon fell into decadence. It was the same with Jezreel and the principal cities of the North.

* Schrader, pp. 272, 274. The actual destruction of Samaria, which led to its rebuilding by Herod, took place under John Hyrcanus: Jos., *Ant.*, XIII. x. 2 and following; *B. J.*, ii. 7.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE GENERAL WORK OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

Thus ends, so far as regards religious history, after an existence of 250 years, this little kingdom, which was to the highest degree creative, but which did not know how to crown its edifice. Iahveism had already reached a high pitch of originality, its prophets, more especially, representing the most finished type of that which the future was to develop, while its writers traced with marvellous art the early framework of the *Thora* and of sacred history. But organisation was wanting because the dynasty was wanting. The prophets of the North did not possess the summit of audacity, that which boldly arrogates to itself the future. They never ventured to declare, as Israel had already done for Zion, that Bethel or the Garizim would one day be the religious centre of humanity.

In poetry, as in literature, the North was inferior to Judah. To the kingdom of Israel we owe the epic narratives of the Book of Judges, the patriarchal legends, the early canticles, the idyllic and amorous

poetry, the Book of the Alliance and several fine passages of prophecy. But the religious institutions which have conquered the world are the work of Jerusalem. If Jerusalem had perished with Samaria, the destiny of Israel, taken as a whole, would have been brought to a stop.

But it may be said that, on the contrary, the disappearance of Samaria served the cause of the general work of Israel, and that a singular vocation had devolved upon the descendants of the aged Jacob, just as the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus was an extraordinary piece of good fortune for nascent Christianity. So the destruction of Samaria was an incredible stroke of luck for Judaism. Israel was not made for being a profane country. Reduced to an area of twelve or fifteen leagues square, it will now be able to devote itself entirely to its true work. Jerusalem is about to become a centre of absolutely incomparable fermentation. The hill of Zion will be without any rival; it will be the one religious loadstone of humanity.

David also is in future to reign alone, and theocracy bore its natural fruit, viz, divine right and the principle of legitimacy. Isaiah, whom we may call the father of legitimism, was right. Zion alone was a solid rock. David will gradually be idealised until he at length becomes the theocratic sovereign *par excellence*, the king after God's own heart.

History and the documents relating to the ancient religious movement of Israel have, in short, been

handed down to us by Judah. Now Judæa, while accepting some of the very fine passages written among the tribes of the North, and fusing them with its own, scarcely did justice to Israel.* The historiographers denounced a religious state of things, the only fault to be found with which was that it was not the one which prevailed at a later date. "The sin of Jeroboam" was the commonplace reproach levelled at these kings, all of whom appear to have been brave and some of them capable. In a century or so, the unity of the place of worship will be the fundamental religious law of Judaism. Ephraim will find no forgiveness for its numerous sanctuaries, for the altars which each locality possessed, "from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city."† The high places, the *aserat* and the *massebot,* which were to be met with at every step, the two molten bulls of Dan and Bethel, the *astarteïa* and the impure practices still pursued there, the *Baalim,* and all the host of heaven so inconsiderately treated as divine,‡ were abuses, beyond doubt; but Judah, at the same date, was not exempt from them. Prophecy by Baal§ did not imply general apostasy. The monstrous custom of passing children through the fire, divining, sorcery and witchcraft, condemned by all enlightened Israelites, were even more Jerusalemite than they were Samarian evils. The world was nearly as unjust for the kingdom of Israel as it would be in reproaching

* See 2 Kings, ch. xvii. v. 7–23. † Ibid. ch. xvii. v. 9.
‡ Ibid. ch. xvii. v. 16, 17. § Jeremiah, ch. xxiii. v. 13.

ancient Gaul for not having practised, before the birth of Christianity, all the rites of the Christian worship.

Samaria never recovered politically from the blow dealt it by Shalmaneser. One of the traits of Assyrian policy was a certain liking for an exchange of populations between the different countries conquered. The idea of transportation is already to be found in Amos.* We have already met with one instance in the case of the inhabitants of Damascus transported to Kir.† Even before this, the inhabitants of Palestine had been sent to the great desert tracks of Babylonia.‡ It may be assumed that the Ninivite forces had almost entirely absorbed the inhabitants of these countries, and that, in order to people them anew, the conquerors were compelled to transport thither the populations which the fate of battle placed at their mercy. The largest part of the Israelite nation was transported into Assyria, and settled either in the Khalahhène, near Nineveh, to the north, or upon the river Habor,§ in the Gozan, or in the mountains of the Medes.|| The Judaites preserved for a long time some vague notion as to their dispersed brethren.¶ When Judah was brought by

* Amos, ch. vi. v. 7. † See above, p. 430.

‡ See above, p. 412.

§ Probably identical with the Kebar of Ezekiel, the Chaboras, large tributary of the Euphrates.

|| Rather vague designations; readings uncertain.

¶ 2 Kings, ch. xvii. v. 23, written about the middle of the sixth century.

exile into these same regions, the religious fraternity of the two branches of Israel was lost. Then came complete oblivion, and the field was open to suppositions of every kind. The Iahveism of the North was not strongly enough knit to resist the trial of transportation. We shall find, on the contrary, the Iahveism of Jerusalem—or, to be more accurate, Judaism—coming stronger out of exile, and reconstituting itself upon the soil from which it had been violently torn, on a firmer basis than before.

In place of the tribes carried into Mesopotamia and Assyria,* the Assyrian Government sent into Samaria the populations of Babylonia and of northern Syria (Hamath).† The idea that each province has its geographical god, who likes to be worshipped in a certain way, and who takes vengeance if he does not receive the customary honours, was a very general one in ancient times. The people who came to dwell in a country thought it compulsory upon them to assume the religion of that country. Certain mishaps which befell the Assyrian colonists led them to believe that the native god was angry with them. There was a rumour of men having been attacked by lions (the state of the country makes this very probable), which were regarded as emissaries of the gods who had been neglected. According to this

* 2 Kings, ch. xvii. v. 24, and following.

† Cuthah, Ava, Sefharvaim, unknown countries, the identity or even existence of which is doubtful.

narrative, to a great extent fictitious,* the new inhabitants of the country had so little idea of being in fraternity of worship with Jerusalem, that they turned not to that city, but to Nineveh, for relief. The Assyrian Government, we are told, quite entered into their ideas, and sent some of the priests who had been deputed to teach them the worship of this god. These priests settled at Bethel, and re-established the sacrifices according to the ancient rites. But the colonists did not, upon that account, abandon their national deities. They set them up in the high places of Samaria, and the men of Babylon made Succoth-Benoth † (*Sicca-Venerea*) or *Astarteion*, the men of Cuthah made Nergal, and the men of Hamoth made *Ashima* (?), and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech.

This is no doubt a way of presenting the case which was conceived after the captivity of Judah, under the influence of the feud which divided Jerusalem and Samaria. There was not, in reality, any desert to people. Exile, upon this as upon all like occasions, scarcely affected any but the *élite* of the nation.‡

* The Book of Ezra, ch. iv. v. 2, 9, gives a still more frivolous view of the matter.

† "House of harlots."

‡ The number of 27,280 persons transported, said to be given in the Assyrian texts (Schrader, pp. 272–274) must not be taken too literally. These texts, moreover, represent the state of the country after the campaign as being analogous to what it was before.

A great many Ephraimites settled at Jerusalem or fled into Egypt. The greater part of the ancient population remained in the land.* The region beyond Jordan, more especially, was Israelite by race and by feeling. All these Iahveist elements still existed, but in a state of rough-hewn simplicity, without a priesthood, and more disorganised than ever.† Having lost their autonomy, they looked to Jerusalem for a centre. Jerusalem and the Temple thus gained not a little by the ruin of the kingdom of the North. We shall find Isaiah ruling as the religious sovereign of nearly all Palestine;‡ and if the kingdom of Judah had not been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, it is probable that the wound opened by Jeroboam would have been almost, if not altogether closed. Henceforth, Judah will carry on alone the work which had devolved upon the race of Israel as a whole, and will carry it on with a singleness of purpose far beyond that shown by the tribes of the North. Even half a century before the capture of Samaria, nearly all the activity of the Hebrew genius was concentrated in Judæa. Prophetism had reached its main results, viz., monotheism, God (or Iahveh) being the unique cause of the phenomena of the universe; the justice of Iahveh, the need that this justice should be realised upon earth, and for each

* 2 Chronicles, ch. xxxiv. v. 6; Jeremiah, ch. xli. v. 5, 6.

† 2 Kings, ch. xvii. v. 32, and following.

‡ Even Hezekiah as well, if we are to believe 2 Chronicles, ch. xxx.; but this is a very poor authority.

individual within the limits of his existence; a democratic puritanism of morals, a hatred of luxury, of profane civilisation and of obligations, resulting from a complicated civil organisation; absolute trust in Iahveh, the worship of Iahveh consisting above all else in purity of sentiment. The immensity of such a revolution strikes one with astonishment, and when one reflects upon the matter, the period at which this creation took place is the most fruitful one in all religious history. Even the initial movement of Christianity, in the first century of our era, takes a second place, by comparison, with this extraordinary movement of Jewish prophetism in the eighth century B.C. Jesus is all contained in Isaiah. The humanitarian destiny of Israel is as clearly written about 720 as that of Greece will be two centuries later.

Before the epoch of Elijah and Elisha, Israel does not differ in any essential particulars from the neighbouring peoples; it has no mark upon the forehead. From the period at which we have now arrived, its vocation is distinctly marked. After a very favourable reign (that of Hezekiah), prophetism is destined to pass through a long period of trial (the reigns of Manasseh and Amon), and then to gain a complete triumph under Josiah. The history of Judah will henceforth be the history of a religion at first confined within itself for long centuries, and then being mixed up, by the victory of Christianity, with the general movement of humanity. The cry of justice uttered by the prophets of old will no

longer be stifled. Greece will found the lay society, free in the meaning understood by economists, without paying any heed to the sufferings of the weak, brought about by the grandeur of the social achievement. Prophetism will accentuate the just complaint of the poor, it will sap the base of the army and of royalty in Israel, but it will found the synagogue, the church, and the associations of the poor, which, from the time of Theodosius, will become all powerful and will govern the world. During the Middle Ages the loud voice of the prophets, interpreted by Saint Jerome,* will strike terror into the rich and the mighty, and will check, for the benefit of the poor, or those so-called, all industrial, scientific and worldly development.

The Germanic lay spirit counteracted the influence of this oppressive Ebionism. The man of war, whether Frank, Lombard, Saxon or Frisian, had his revenge upon the man of God. The man of war in the Middle Ages was so simple-minded that his credulity soon threw him back beneath the yoke of theocracy; but the Renaissance and Protestantism set him at liberty, and the Church was never able to seize her prey afresh. In reality, the barbarian, like the most brutal of lay princes, was a liberator by comparison with the Christian priest who had the secular arm at his command. The oppression exercised in the name of a spiritual principle is the

* The socialist sects of the Middle Ages, connected more or less with Abbot Joachim's "eternal gospel," lived upon the Prophets, especially Jeremiah, and took from them their frenzied declamations.

hardest of all; the lay tyrant is content with the homage of bodies; the community which is powerful enough to cram its ideas down other people's throats is the worst of all scourges.

The work of the prophets has thus remained one of the essential elements of the history of the world. The movement of the world is the outcome of the parallelogram of two forces, liberalism upon the one hand and socialism upon the other—liberalism impelling its adepts to the highest degree of human development; socialism accounting above all else justice most strictly interpreted, and the happiness of the greatest number, often sacrificed in reality to the requirements of civilisation and of the State. The socialist of the present day, who declaims against the abuses inevitable in a large and well-organised society, is very like Amos, in representing as monstrous evils the most patent necessities of social life, such as the payment of debts, the lending upon mortgage, and taxation.

In order to venture an opinion as to which of these two opposite courses is the right one, we should need first to know what is the goal of humanity. Is it the welfare of the individuals who go to make it up? Is it the obtaining of certain abstract or objective aims, as they are called, which demand the sacrifice of hecatombs of persons? Each one replies according to his moral disposition, and that is enough. The universe, which never discloses all its secrets, obtains its object by an infinite variety of germs. What

Iahveh desires always happens. Let us not be troubled; if we are among those who are going astray, who are running counter to the supreme will, that is of little consequence. Humanity is one of the countless ant-hills among which the trial of reason is being carried on in the midst of space; if we miss our goal others will reach it.

END OF VOL. II.






DS
9
v.2
3 1158 01218 6218
UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
AA 000 463 268 3

